

Appendix H NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The Notice of Preparation was circulated for comments from 06/16/2003 to 06/15/2003.

| Agency | Date | Issues/Concerns |
|---|---------|--|
| Federal Government | | |
| U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service | 7/27/03 | Direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on federally listed species |
| State Government | | |
| Dept. of Conservation | 7/18/03 | Agricultural setting and project impacts on agricultural land, Williamson Act lands and mitigation measures |
| California Regional Water Quality Control Board | 6/19/03 | Water Quality certification, Storm water |
| County & Local Governments | | |
| County of Yolo | 7/18/03 | Aesthetics, Agricultural resources, Air Quality, Biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, population and housing, public services, transportation/ traffic, utilities and service systems. |
| Yolo/Solano Air Quality Management District | 7/15/03 | Air Quality |
| Yolo County Flood Control and Water Management District | 7/15/03 | Minimizing flood impacts |
| Esparto Community Service District | 6/26/03 | Sewer ponds |
| YoloBus, Yolo county Transportation District | 6/24/03 | Impact on floodplain. Improving LOS, Impacts to transit services during construction. |
| Citizens | | |
| Michael Plyer | 7/21/03 | Downscale the project. |
| Barbara & Hans Herron | 7/21/03 | Provide and alternate road for Casino customers. Concerned that making the road easier to drive will increase speed and make it less safe. |

| Agency | Date | Issues/Concerns |
|------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Trini Campbell | 7/23/03 | EIR should acknowledge recent development. Reduced speed limits should be evaluated. |
| Paul Muller | 7/23/03 | Growth inducing, source of funding, speed of traffic, |
| State Route 16 Safety Sooner | No date | A petition with 12 names |
| George Story | 6/24/03 | Long range planning in the Esparto area |
| Agricultural Industries Inc. | 7/7/03 | Access to SR 16, wells, flooding |
| John & Meredith Stevens | 7/8/03 | Coordination, Soils, Community Impacts, Private intersection improvements |
| Capay Valley Vineyards | 7/10/03 | Parkway concept, Driver safety, Casino access |
| Nina Andres | 7/11/03 | Safety, Agricultural impacts |
| Ann Scheuring | 7/21/03 | Casino involvement, Safety, traffic speeds |
| Cathy Suematsu | 7/22/03 | Suggested improvements to design, agricultural impacts, growth inducement, cumulative impacts |
| L & Ann Wendland | 7/21/03 | Context sensitive design |
| Dr. Anne Pym McDonald | 7/21/03 | Agricultural impacts, Casino involvement. |
| Michael McDonald | 7/21/03 | Traffic speed, Casino involvement |
| Harmon & Greta Taber | 7/21/03 | Context sensitive design |

TO: Agencies and Interested Persons

FROM: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
John Webb, Office Chief
North Region Environmental Services

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR PROPOSED SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS TO STATE ROUTE 16 IN YOLO
COUNTY, CA

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: June 16, 2003 to July 15, 2003

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 3, is the lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above referenced project located in Yolo County. The document is being prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

CEQA Section 15082 states that once a decision is made to prepare an EIR, the Lead Agency must prepare a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform all responsible and trustee agencies that an EIR will be prepared. The purpose of an EIR is to provide responsible agencies and interested persons with sufficient information describing the proposed project and the potential environmental effects to enable them to make meaningful response as to the scope and content of the information to be included within the EIR.

Layouts of the draft project proposal have been sent with this NOP to public agencies. Other interested parties may view the plans at the Esparto Library (17065 Yolo Avenue Esparto, CA 95627) Monday through Thursday 1 to 8 pm, and Saturday 10 am to 2 pm. The document will also be available on the Internet at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/projects/yolo16/envdoc.htm> or at Caltrans, District 3 (2389 Gateway Oaks Dr., Ste. 100 Sacramento, CA 95833) Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4 pm.

COMMENTS

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed project are addressed and that all significant issues are identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency. Written comments or questions concerning this project should be sent by July 15, 2003 to:

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located along State Route (SR) 16 between Brooks and Interstate 505 in Yolo County, a distance of approximately 21 miles (Figure 1).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section of SR 16 has seen a significant increase in traffic volumes and accidents in recent years. The majority of the existing highway facility is not up to current Caltrans standards and a portion is susceptible to flooding.

The following improvements are intended to improve safety along SR 16 by reducing the number and severity of accidents.

- Provide a 20-foot clear recover zone which includes 8-foot shoulders and place rumble strips on both sides of SR 16 for the length of the project, except within the towns of Esparto and Capay.
- Improve several intersections, including turning lanes.
- Correct several non-standard curves.
- Raise SR 16 out of the 100-year floodplain between Esparto and Interstate 505.

- Widen and/or replace all affected bridges.

Additional right-of-way adjacent to SR 16 would be required to accommodate the proposed project.

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Caltrans intends to utilize the existing SR 16 corridor to the extent feasible for the proposed safety improvements. The alternatives analysis will focus on design variations and construction scenarios that minimize environmental impacts while achieving the projects objectives.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AFFECTED BY PROPOSAL

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The proposed improvements will necessitate the full and partial acquisition of several public and privately owned parcels.. The majority of the right of way that will be acquired for this project is agricultural but in some cases the acquisitions will require the relocation of residents.

FARMLAND

The proposed project would require the State to purchase right-of-way from adjacent landowners. The majority of the land that would be needed is used for various types of agriculture. A Farmland Conversion Impact Rating will be required to comply with the Farmland Protection Policy Act. Furthermore, it will be necessary to determine the impacts to designated Williamson Act farmlands as well as evaluate the impacts of the conversion of prime and unique farmlands.

WATER QUALITY

The project site is located within the lower Cache Creek drainage basin and several watercourses are present within the project study area.

Cache Creek is known to contain high levels of mercury in the sub surface. While the project will not directly impact Cache Creek there is a potential that mercury has been spread by floodwaters and contaminated soil could be disturbed by this project. Additional studies will determine the level and extent of the contamination so that appropriate measures can be taken to minimize exposure of those soils and the spread of any contamination.

FLOODPLAINS

The proposed project would require that fill material be placed within the 100 year floodplain in order to raise the roadway out of the floodplain. In order to minimize the impact of this fill material on the existing floodplain other areas may be excavated or otherwise modified in such a way that the project will not adversely impact the floodplain consistent with the standards/criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Sensitive Habitats

Sensitive habitats occurring or potentially occurring in the project study area include blue elderberry shrubs, which are the host plant for the federally threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB) oak trees. Also occurring in the study area are valley oak and blue oak, creeks and riparian corridors and wetlands.

An undetermined number of elderberry shrubs will be removed or otherwise impacted by the proposed project. These elderberry shrubs could provide habitat for the federally threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle.

The project would remove an undetermined number of oaks located within the study area.

Special-status Animals

There are recorded sightings of ten special-status animal species in the project vicinity: valley elderberry longhorn beetle, California tiger salamander, western spadefoot toad, western pond turtle, Swainson's hawk, prairie falcon, burrowing owl, bank swallow, tri-colored blackbird and Townsend's western big-eared bat.

Four special-status species could occur in the project area due to the presence of potentially suitable habitat, the foothill yellow-legged frog, giant garter snake, Cooper's hawk and white-tailed kite.

Special-status Plant Species

There are recorded sightings of 33 special-status plant species in the general vicinity of the project study area. Habitats in and adjacent to the project study area could potentially support 11 special-status plant species including brittlescale, San Joaquin spearscale, Palmate-bracted bird-beak, deep-scarred cryptantha, Snow Mountain buckwheat, adobe-lily, Northern California black walnut, Heckard's pepper-grass, Colusa grass, Delta woolly-marbles, and Crampton's tuctoria. It is unlikely that these species will occur in the project areas due to the extent of historic and on-going disturbances associated with maintenance and agricultural activities.

Invasive Pest Plant Species

This project could result in the spread of exotic species; and the areas disturbed could enhance the spread of exotic species occurring in the immediate project area.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

At least eight buildings/structures within the project area have been previously evaluated and are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. According to the Caltrans State Historical Bridge Listing, none of the bridges along the project route are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The project area is expected to contain both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and/or features. Very little of the project area has been surveyed for cultural resources in the past, and it is likely that archeological test excavations will be required at select locations.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous waste investigations will be conducted to determine the type and extent of any hazardous waste contamination within the project area. At this time it is anticipated that mercury and/or aerially deposited lead contaminated soils may be present in the project area.

AIR QUALITY

There may be short-term air quality impacts associated with the construction of the proposed improvements. The sources likely sources of air pollution are exhaust from construction equipment, and windblown dust (fugitive dust) generated during excavation, grading, and hauling. The impacts from these activities would vary each day as construction progresses and according to the proximity of the receptors to the construction activities.

NOISE

If traffic noise impacts are identified, noise abatement measures will be considered for inclusion in the project.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825-1846

IN REPLY REFER TO
PPN 3058

July 25, 2003

Ms. Karen McWilliams
Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, California 95833

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the State Route (SR) 16 Safety Project in Yolo County, California. The proposed project involves three segments of SR 16 (Post mile 18.8-25.1, 25.7-27.1, and 28.3-31.6) and includes:

- Providing a 20-foot clear recover zone (including eight-foot shoulders and the placement of rumble strips).
- Improvement of several intersections, including turning lanes.
- Correcting several non-standard curves.
- Raising SR 16 out of the 100-year floodplain between Esparto and Interstate 505.
- Widening and/or replacing all affected bridges.

The enclosures provided in this letter are intended to assist you in the early environmental review of this proposal. Future consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) may be required under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and/or the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), if project activities are anticipated to affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or impact jurisdictional wetlands pursuant to the Clean Water Act.

Enclosure A provides a list of sensitive species that may occur in or near the project site and general related information and survey guidelines. The Service recommends that surveys be completed by a qualified biologist on the proposed project site to confirm the presence or absence of special-status species or their habitats.

There are recorded sightings of ten special-status animal species in the project vicinity: valley elderberry longhorn beetle, California tiger salamander, western spade foot toad, western pond turtle, Swainson's hawk, prairie falcon, burrowing owl, bank swallow, tri-colored blackbird and Townsend's western big-eared bat.

Four special-status species could occur in the project area due to the presence of potentially suitable habitat, the foothill yellow-legged frog, giant garter snake, Cooper's hawk and white-tailed kite.

Special-status Plant Species

There are recorded sightings of 33 special-status plant species in the general vicinity of the project study area. Habitats in and adjacent to the project study area could potentially support 11 special-status plant species including brittlescale, San Joaquin spearscale, Palmate-bracted bird-beak, deep-scattered cryptantha, Snow Mountain buckwheat, adobe-lily, Northern California black walnut, Heckard's pepper-grass, Colusa grass, Delta woolly-marbles, and Crampton's tuctoria. It is unlikely that these species will occur in the project areas due to the extent of historic and on-going disturbances associated with maintenance and agricultural activities.

Invasive Pest Plant Species

This project could result in the spread of exotic species; and the areas disturbed could enhance the spread of exotic species occurring in the immediate project area.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

At least eight buildings/structures within the project area have been previously evaluated and are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. According to the Caltrans State Historical Bridge Listing, none of the bridges along the project route are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The project area is expected to contain both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and/or features. Very little of the project area has been surveyed for cultural resources in the past, and it is likely that archeological test excavations will be required at select locations.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous waste investigations will be conducted to determine the type and extent of any hazardous waste contamination within the project area. At this time it is anticipated that mercury and/or aerially deposited lead contaminated soils may be present in the project area.

AIR QUALITY

There may be short-term air quality impacts associated with the construction of the proposed improvements. The sources likely sources of air pollution are exhaust from construction equipment, and windblown dust (fugitive dust) generated during excavation, grading, and hauling. The impacts from these activities would vary each day as construction progresses and according to the proximity of the receptors to the construction activities.

NOISE

If traffic noise impacts are identified, noise abatement measures will be considered for inclusion in the project.

Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on federally listed species and species of concern should be evaluated. The existing conditions on the project site(s) provide actual or potential habitat for many species of concern. Species of concern are provided no protection under the ESA. However, one potential benefit of considering species of concern is that by exploring alternatives early in the planning process, it may be possible to provide long-term conservation benefits for these species and avoid future conflicts that could otherwise develop.

Enclosure B recommends general guidelines for identifying and mitigating project impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitats. The Council on Environmental Quality developed regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, and defines mitigation to include: (1) avoiding the impact; (2) minimizing the impact; (3) rectifying the impact; (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time; and (5) compensating for impacts. The Service supports and adopts this definition of mitigation and considers the specific elements to represent the desirable sequence of steps in the mitigation planning process. Accordingly, we maintain that the best way to mitigate for the adverse biological impacts is avoidance when at all possible.

We encourage you to use these guidelines to develop a comprehensive environmental document that addresses these needs.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Jerry Bielfeldt (Watershed Planning Branch) in the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office at (916) 414-6584.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Harlow", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David L. Harlow
Acting Field Supervisor

Enclosures

cc:

AES, Portland, OR

Regional Manager, CDFG, Region 2, Rancho Cordova, CA (w/o enclosures)

Enclosure A

Endangered and Threatened Species that May Occur in
or be Affected by Projects in the Selected Quads Listed Below

Reference File No. 1-1-03-SP-2229

Draft EIR for Proposed Safety Improvements to SR 16 in Yolo County

June 23, 2003

QUAD: 514B MADISON

Listed Species

Birds

bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (T)

Reptiles

giant garter snake, *Thamnophis gigas* (T)

Amphibians

California red-legged frog, *Rana aurora draytonii* (T)

Fish

delta smelt, *Hypomesus transpacificus* (T)

Central Valley steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS

winter-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (E) NMFS

Central Valley spring-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (T) NMFS

Sacramento splittail, *Pogonichthys macrolepidotus* (T)

Invertebrates

vernal pool fairy shrimp, *Branchinecta lynchi* (T)

valley elderberry longhorn beetle, *Desmocerus californicus dimorphus* (T)

vernal pool tadpole shrimp, *Lepidurus packardii* (E)

Proposed Species

Birds

mountain plover, *Charadrius montanus* (PT)

Amphibians

California tiger salamander, *Ambystoma californiense* (PT)

Candidate Species

Fish

green sturgeon, *Acipenser medirostris* (C)

Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS

Critical habitat, Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS

Species of Concern

Mammals

Pacific western big-eared bat, *Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii townsendii* (SC)

small-footed myotis bat, *Myotis ciliolabrum* (SC)
 long-legged myotis bat, *Myotis volans* (SC)
 Yuma myotis bat, *Myotis yumanensis* (SC)
 San Joaquin pocket mouse, *Perognathus inornatus* (SC)

Birds

tricolored blackbird, *Agelaius tricolor* (SC)
 western burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia hypugaea* (SC)
 oak titmouse, *Baeolophus inornatus* (SLC)
 Aleutian Canada goose, *Branta canadensis leucopareia* (D)
 Swainson's hawk, *Buteo Swainsoni* (CA)
 ferruginous hawk, *Buteo regalis* (SC)
 Lawrence's goldfinch, *Carduelis lawrencei* (SC)
 Vaux's swift, *Chaetura vauxi* (SC)
 white-tailed (=black shouldered) kite, *Elanus leucurus* (SC)
 little willow flycatcher, *Empidonax traillii brewsteri* (CA)
 prairie falcon, *Falco mexicanus* (SC)
 American peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum* (D)
 greater sandhill crane, *Grus canadensis tabida* (CA)
 loggerhead shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* (SC)
 Lewis' woodpecker, *Melanerpes lewis* (SC)
 long-billed curlew, *Numenius americanus* (SC)
 Nuttall's woodpecker, *Picoides nuttallii* (SLC)
 white-faced ibis, *Plegadis chihi* (SC)
 bank swallow, *Riparia riparia* (CA)
 rufous hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* (SC)

Reptiles

northwestern pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata marmorata* (SC)

Amphibians

western spadefoot toad, *Spea hammondi* (SC)

Fish

river lamprey, *Lampetra ayresi* (SC)
 Pacific lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata* (SC)
 longfin smelt, *Spirinchus thaleichthys* (SC)

Invertebrates

Midvalley fairy shrimp, *Branchinecta mesoavallensis* (SC)
 California linderiella fairy shrimp, *Linderiella occidentalis* (SC)

QUAD: 515A ESPARTO

Listed Species

Birds

- bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (T)
- northern spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis caurina* (T)

Reptiles

- giant garter snake, *Thamnophis gigas* (T)

Amphibians

- California red-legged frog, *Rana aurora draytonii* (T)

Fish

- delta smelt, *Hypomesus transpacificus* (T)
- Central Valley steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS
- winter-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (E) NMFS
- Central Valley spring-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (T) NMFS
- Sacramento splittail, *Pogonichthys macrolepidotus* (T)

Invertebrates

- vernal pool fairy shrimp, *Branchinecta lynchi* (T)
- valley elderberry longhorn beetle, *Desmocerus californicus dimorphus* (T)
- vernal pool tadpole shrimp, *Lepidurus packardii* (E)
- California freshwater shrimp, *Syncaris pacifica* (E)

Proposed Species

Amphibians

- California tiger salamander, *Ambystoma californiense* (PT)

Candidate Species

Fish

- green sturgeon, *Acipenser medirostris* (C)
- Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS
- Critical habitat, Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS

Species of Concern

Mammals

- Pacific western big-eared bat, *Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii townsendii* (SC)
- greater western mastiff-bat, *Eumops perotis californicus* (SC)
- small-footed myotis bat, *Myotis ciliolabrum* (SC)
- long-eared myotis bat, *Myotis evotis* (SC)
- fringed myotis bat, *Myotis thysanodes* (SC)

long-legged myotis bat, *Myotis volans* (SC)
Yuma myotis bat, *Myotis yumanensis* (SC)
San Joaquin pocket mouse, *Perognathus inornatus* (SC)

Birds

tricolored blackbird, *Agelaius tricolor* (SC)
western burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia hypugaea* (SC)
oak titmouse, *Baeolophus inornatus* (SLC)
Aleutian Canada goose, *Branta canadensis leucopareia* (D)
Swainson's hawk, *Buteo Swainsoni* (CA)
ferruginous hawk, *Buteo regalis* (SC)
Lawrence's goldfinch, *Carduelis lawrencei* (SC)
Vaux's swift, *Chaetura vauxi* (SC)
white-tailed (=black shouldered) kite, *Elanus leucurus* (SC)
little willow flycatcher, *Empidonax traillii brewsteri* (CA)
prairie falcon, *Falco mexicanus* (SC)
American peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum* (D)
greater sandhill crane, *Grus canadensis tabida* (CA)
loggerhead shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* (SC)
Lewis' woodpecker, *Melanerpes lewis* (SC)
long-billed curlew, *Numenius americanus* (SC)
white-faced ibis, *Plegadis chihi* (SC)
bank swallow, *Riparia riparia* (CA)
rufous hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* (SC)
California thrasher, *Toxostoma redivivum* (SC)

Reptiles

northwestern pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata marmorata* (SC)

Amphibians

foothill yellow-legged frog, *Rana boylei* (SC)
western spadefoot toad, *Spea hammondi* (SC)

Fish

river lamprey, *Lampetra ayresi* (SC)
Pacific lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata* (SC)
longfin smelt, *Spirinchus thaleichthys* (SC)

Invertebrates

California linderiella fairy shrimp, *Linderiella occidentalis* (SC)

Endangered and Threatened Species that May Occur in or be Affected by
PROJECTS IN YOLO COUNTY
Reference File No. 1-1-03-SP-2229
Draft EIR for Proposed Safety Improvements to SR 16 in Yolo County
June 23, 2003

Listed Species

Birds

- bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (T)
- northern spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis caurina* (T)

Reptiles

- giant garter snake, *Thamnophis gigas* (T)

Amphibians

- California red-legged frog, *Rana aurora draytonii* (T)

Fish

- Critical habitat, winter-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (E) NMFS
- winter-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (E) NMFS
- Critical habitat, delta smelt, *Hypomesus transpacificus* (T)
- delta smelt, *Hypomesus transpacificus* (T)
- Central Valley steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS
- Central Valley spring-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (T) NMFS
- Sacramento splittail, *Pogonichthys macrolepidotus* (T)

Invertebrates

- Conservancy fairy shrimp, *Branchinecta conservatio* (E)
- vernal pool tadpole shrimp, *Lepidurus packardii* (E)
- vernal pool fairy shrimp, *Branchinecta lynchi* (T)
- valley elderberry longhorn beetle, *Desmocerus californicus dimorphus* (T)

Plants

- palmate-bracted bird's-beak, *Cordylanthus palmatus* (E)
- Solano grass (=Crampton's tuctoria), *Tuctoria mucronata* (E)
- Colusa grass, *Neostapfia colusana* (T)

Proposed Species

Birds

mountain plover, *Charadrius montanus* (PT)

Amphibians

California tiger salamander, *Ambystoma californiense* (PT)

Invertebrates

Critical habitat, vernal pool invertebrates, *See Federal Register 67:59883* (PX)

Plants

Critical habitat, vernal pool plants, *See Federal Register 67:59883* (PX)

Candidate Species

Birds

Western yellow-billed cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus occidentalis* (C)

Fish

green sturgeon, *Acipenser medirostris* (C)

Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS

Critical habitat, Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS

Species of Concern

Mammals

Pacific western big-eared bat, *Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii townsendii* (SC)

greater western mastiff-bat, *Eumops perotis californicus* (SC)

small-footed myotis bat, *Myotis ciliolabrum* (SC)

long-eared myotis bat, *Myotis evotis* (SC)

fringed myotis bat, *Myotis thysanodes* (SC)

long-legged myotis bat, *Myotis volans* (SC)

Yuma myotis bat, *Myotis yumanensis* (SC)

San Joaquin pocket mouse, *Perognathus inornatus* (SC)

Birds

little willow flycatcher, *Empidonax traillii brewsteri* (CA)

greater sandhill crane, *Grus canadensis tabida* (CA)

bank swallow, *Riparia riparia* (CA)

Aleutian Canada goose, *Branta canadensis leucopareia* (D)

American peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum* (D)

western burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia hypugaea* (SC)

American bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus* (SC)

ferruginous hawk, *Buteo regalis* (SC)

Lawrence's goldfinch, *Carduelis lawrencei* (SC)

Vaux's swift, *Chaetura vauxi* (SC)

olive-sided flycatcher, *Contopus cooperi* (SC)

white-tailed (=black shouldered) kite, *Elanus leucurus* (SC)

loggerhead shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* (SC)

marbled godwit, *Limosa fedoa* (SC)

Lewis' woodpecker, *Melanerpes lewis* (SC)

long-billed curlew, *Numenius americanus* (SC)

white-faced ibis, *Plegadis chihi* (SC)

rufous hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* (SC)

red-breasted sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus ruber* (SC)

California thrasher, *Toxostoma redivivum* (SC)

oak titmouse, *Baeolophus inornatus* (SLC)

Nuttall's woodpecker, *Picoides nuttallii* (SLC)

Reptiles

northwestern pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata marmorata* (SC)

southwestern pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata pallida* (SC)

San Joaquin coachwhip (=whipsnake), *Masticophis flagellum ruddocki* (SC)

California horned lizard, *Phrynosoma coronatum frontale* (SC)

Amphibians

foothill yellow-legged frog, *Rana boylei* (SC)

western spadefoot toad, *Spea hammondi* (SC)

Fish

river lamprey, *Lampetra ayresi* (SC)

Pacific lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata* (SC)

longfin smelt, *Spirinchus thaleichthys* (SC)

Invertebrates

Antioch Dunes anthicid beetle, *Anthicus antiochensis* (SC)

Sacramento anthicid beetle, *Anthicus sacramento* (SC)

Midvalley fairy shrimp, *Branchinecta mesoallensis* (SC)

brownish dubiraphian riffle beetle, *Dubiraphia brunnescens* (SC)

California linderiella fairy shrimp, *Linderiella occidentalis* (SC)

Plants

alkali milk-vetch, *Astragalus tener* var. *tener* (SC)

brittlescale, *Atriplex depressa* (SC)

San Joaquin spearscale (=saltbush), *Atriplex joaquiniana* (SC)

Snow Mountain buckwheat, *Eriogonum nervulosum* (SC)

adobe lily, *Fritillaria pluriflora* (SC)

drymaria dwarf-flax (=western flax), *Hesperolinon drymarioides* (SC)

Hall's madia (=Hall's harmonia), *Madia hallii* (=Harmonia hallii) (SC)

Jepson's milk-vetch, *Astragalus rattanii* var. *jepsonianus* (SLC)

Colusa layia (=Colusa tidytips), *Layia septentrionalis* (SLC)

Heckard's pepper-grass, *Lepidium latipes* var. *heckardii* (SLC)

Ferris's milk-vetch, *Astragalus tener* var. *ferrisiae* (SC) *

heartscale, *Atriplex cordulata* (SC) *

Northern California black walnut, *Juglans californica* var. *hindsii* (SC) *

KEY:

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---|
| (E) | <i>Endangered</i> | Listed (in the Federal Register) as being in danger of extinction. |
| (T) | <i>Threatened</i> | Listed as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. |
| (P) | <i>Proposed</i> | Officially proposed (in the Federal Register) for listing as endangered or threatened. |
| (PX) | <i>Proposed Critical Habitat</i> | Proposed as an area essential to the conservation of the species. |
| (C) | <i>Candidate</i> | Candidate to become a <i>proposed</i> species. |
| (SC) | <i>Species of Concern</i> | Other species of concern to the Service. |
| (SLC) | <i>Species of Local Concern</i> | Species of local or regional concern or conservation significance. |
| (D) | <i>Delisted</i> | Delisted. Status to be monitored for 5 years. |
| (CA) | <i>State-Listed</i> | Listed as threatened or endangered by the State of California. |
| NMFS | NMFS species | Under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service. Contact them directly. |
| * | <i>Extirpated</i> | Possibly extirpated from the area. |
| ** | <i>Extinct</i> | Possibly extinct |
| | <i>Critical Habitat</i> | Area essential to the conservation of a species. |

ENCLOSURE B

The goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and their habitats by timely and effective provision of fish and wildlife information and recommendations. To assist us in accomplishing this goal, we would like to see the items described below discussed in your environmental documents for the proposed project.

Project Description. The document should very clearly state the purposes of, and document the needs for, the proposed project so that the capabilities of the various alternatives to meet the purposes and needs can be readily determined.

A thorough description of all permanent and temporary facilities to be constructed, and all work to be done as a part of the project should be included. The document should identify any associated new access roads, equipment staging areas, and gravel processing facilities. Figures accurately depicting proposed project features in relation to natural features (such as streams, wetlands, riparian areas, and other habitat types) in the project area should be included.

Affected Environment. The document should show the location of, and describe, all vegetative cover types in the areas potentially affected by all project alternatives and associated activities. Tables with acreages of each cover type with and without the project for each alternative would also be appropriate. We recommend that all wetlands in the project area be delineated and described according to the classification system found in the Service's Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (Cowardin 1979). The Service's National Wetland Inventory maps would be one starting point for this effort.

The document should present and analyze a full range of alternatives to the proposed project. At least one alternative should be designed to avoid all impacts to wetlands, including riparian areas. Similarly, within each alternative, measures to minimize or avoid impacts to wetlands should be included.

Lists of fish and wildlife species expected to occur in the project area should be in the document. The lists should also indicate whether or not each species is a resident or migrant, and the period(s) of the year it would be expected in the project area.

Environmental Consequences. The sections on impacts to fish and wildlife should discuss impacts from vegetation removal (both permanent and temporary), filling or degradation of wetlands, interruption of wildlife migration corridors, and disturbance from trucks and other machinery during construction and/or operation. These sections should also analyze possible impacts to streams from construction of outfall structures, pipeline crossings, and filling. Impacts on water quality, including nutrient loading, sedimentation, toxics, biological oxygen demand, and temperature in receiving waters should also be discussed in detail along with the resultant effects on fish and aquatic invertebrates. Discussion of indirect impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitats, including impacts from growth induced by the proposed project, should also be addressed in the document. The impacts of each alternative should be discussed in sufficient detail to allow comparison between the alternatives.

Because of their very high value to migratory birds, and their ever-increasing scarcity in California, our mitigation goal for wetlands (including riparian and riverine wetlands) is no net loss of in-kind habitat value or acreage (whichever is greater).

In those situations where impacts are unavoidable, adequate mitigation should be provided to offset these impacts. To determine mitigation credits for a given mitigation project, we evaluate the expected future conditions on the mitigation site in the absence of mitigation actions, and then compare those conditions to conditions we expect to develop with implementation of the mitigation plan.

For unavoidable impacts, to determine the mitigation credits available for a given mitigation project, we evaluate what conditions would exist on the mitigation site in the future in the absence of the mitigation actions, and compare those conditions to the conditions we would expect to develop on the site with implementation of the mitigation plan.

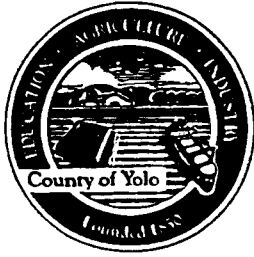
Mitigation habitat should be equal to or exceed the quality of the habitat to be affected by the project. Baseline information would need to be gathered at the impact site to be able to quantify this goal in terms of plant species diversity, shrub and tree canopy cover, stems/acre, tree height, etc. The ultimate success of the project should be judged according to these same measurements at the mitigation site.

Criteria should be developed for assessing the progress of the project during its developmental stages as well. Assessment criteria should include rates of plant growth, plant health, and evidence of natural reproduction. Success criteria should be geared toward equaling or exceeding the quality of the highest quality habitat to be affected. In other words, the mitigation effort would be deemed a success in relation to this goal if the mitigation site met or exceeded habitat measurements at a "model" site (plant cover, density, species diversity, etc.).

The plan should present the proposed ground elevations at the mitigation site, along with elevations in the adjacent areas. A comparison of the soils of the proposed mitigation and adjacent areas should also be included in the plan, and a determination made as to the suitability of the soils to support habitats consistent with the mitigation goals.

Because wetland ecosystems are driven by suitable hydrological conditions, additional information must be developed on the predicted hydrology of the mitigation site. The plan should describe the depth of the water table, and the frequency, duration, areal extent, and depth of flooding which would occur on the site. The hydrologic information should include an analysis of extreme conditions (drought, flooding) as well as typical conditions.

The plan must include a timeframe for implementing the mitigation in relation to the proposed project. We recommend that mitigation be initiated prior to the onset of construction. If there will be a substantial time lag between project construction and completion of the mitigation, a net loss of habitat values would result, and more mitigation would be required to offset this loss.



County of Yolo

PLANNING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

292 West Beamer Street Woodland, CA 95695-2598 530-666-8775 FAX (530) 666-8728
www.yolocounty.org

JOHN BENCOMO
DIRECTOR

July 18, 2003

California Department of Transportation
Attn: Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA. 95833

RE: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Proposed Safety Improvements to State Route 16 in Yolo County, CA.

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

The purpose of this letter is to provide comments in response to the above referenced Notice of Preparation regarding the Draft EIR for proposed safety improvements to State Route 16 in Yolo County. It has been submitted in accordance with the 30-day review period, which will end on July 15, 2003. The County retains the right to submit further comments when both the Draft and Final EIRs are available for public review, should new information and/or analysis become available.

Originally designed as a rural highway, State Route 16 is rapidly evolving into a primary thoroughfare serving the Capay Valley and western Yolo County. As the Cache Creek Casino expansion moves forward and as new development progresses in Esparto, traffic capacity and safety remain high priorities for the State Route 16 corridor. While engineering and environmental review of safety improvements for State Route 16 are critical steps, however, staff looks forward to the timely funding and construction of the proposed project. More importantly, it is also vital that Caltrans and the State actively pursue the necessary resources to ensure the completion of necessary capacity improvements for State Route 16. Without ongoing efforts to address these issues, staff is concerned that the proposed improvements alone will be insufficient to meet future transportation and safety needs.

Based on the information provided within the Notice of Preparation, the County has the following concerns:

Aesthetics: Yolo County has designated State Route as a Scenic Highway in its General Plan. Construction activities to implement the proposed safety improvements could have a short-term impact on the aesthetic qualities of the view shed for passing motorists. It also appears that numerous trees and other mature vegetation would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed improvements. These actions could substantially degrade the existing visual character of the highway corridor and surroundings. Although the short-term aesthetic impacts of construction may be significant and unavoidable, the EIR should include mitigation measures

to provide replacement plantings of suitable species for any vegetation removed as a result of the proposed improvements.

Agriculture Resources: The widening of State Route 16 and acquisition of additional right-of-way could result in the conversion of prime farmland on properties adjoining the highway. The EIR should include mitigation measure to offset the potential loss of agricultural soils and/or Williamson Act lands through the use of permanent conservation easements. In addition, State Route 16 is a primary route for the transport of local farm equipment and connects with numerous private driveways and farm roads. Farm vehicles are often wider and slower moving than other highway traffic, requiring greater shoulders and wider turning radii when entering and exiting the highway. The design of the proposed improvements should take local farm equipment into account to minimize potential traffic conflicts and support the continued agricultural heritage of the Capay Valley.

Air Quality: Construction activities associated with the proposed improvements could generate PM₁₀. Mitigation measures should be included to ensure to control dust, similar to those currently required by the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. Measures should also be incorporated into the EIR to address diesel emissions from heavy construction equipment, to minimize the release of particulates.

Biological Resources: As noted in the Notice of Preparation, there are numerous special-status species located within the area potentially impacted by State Route 16 improvements. A biological survey should be made of any new areas proposed for right-of-way acquisition and/or improvement, to determine if sensitive habitat is present and to develop appropriate mitigation measures to either avoid or offset any impacts to special-status species. In addition, State Route 16 crosses several streams and watercourses. Widening bridges and/or erosion control measures associated with protecting bridge abutments has the potential to adversely affect riparian habitat and/or wetlands. The biological surveys should also look at potential impacts to riparian corridors resulting from the proposed improvements and a delineation study should be conducted where appropriate to determine the extent of potential impact to wetlands.

Cultural Resources: As noted in the Notice of Preparation, much of the area where improvements are proposed has not previously been surveyed for historical, archaeological, or cultural materials. The State Route 16 corridor falls within an area that is the historical home to the Wintun Tribe and has been permanently settled for more than 150 years. An archaeological survey should be made of any new areas proposed for right-of-way acquisition and/or improvement, to determine if cultural resources are present and to develop appropriate mitigation measures to either avoid or document any sensitive areas. In addition, the proposed improvements may affect several older structures that lie along the State Route 16 alignment. These buildings should be evaluated to determine if they qualify for eligibility as historic places and measures developed to ensure that the buildings are either preserved or documented.

Geology and Soils: The State Route 16 corridor is located within an area that is subject to seismic ground shaking. Any improvements developed as a result of the proposed safety project should be engineered to ensure that exposure to nearby earthquake faults is taken into consideration. The steep slopes and soft soils of the hills that border the Capay Valley are subject to landslides. The EIR should ensure that any cuts or realignment of State Route 16 include measures, if appropriate, to prevent the destabilization of nearby slopes. In addition, an erosion control plan and implementing measures should be developed for all disturbed areas associated with the proposed improvements.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: Hazard to public through transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, release of hazardous materials into the environment,

Portions of State Route 16 are located within an area subject to wild land fires. The EIR should include methods to minimize the potential for construction activities to result in wildfires, as well as readily available emergency measures to immediately address fires should they arise.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The proposed improvements could impede or redirect existing flood flows, both where State Route 16 crosses existing watercourses and where it is located within areas of designated flooding. The increased amount of surface runoff generated by highway widening and realignment could also exacerbate areas where flooding already occurs. The EIR should evaluate the potential of the proposed project to affect flooding and develop appropriate mitigation measures to reduce any loss of floodplain capacity resulting from the improvements. As a part of this analysis, the proposed flood detention basins proposed for the area north of State Route 16, near the town of Madison, should be evaluated within the EIR as an alternative project. Construction activities associated with the improvements may result in additional sources of pollution that could be picked up in later storm runoff. Such pollution may include silt, oil/fuel spills, concrete washout and other contaminants that would violate water quality standards. The EIR should include appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that potential contamination is minimized and that all surface runoff generated within the construction area is collected and either filtered or allowed to settle prior to discharge into surface water drains.

Noise: Construction activities associated with the proposed improvements could result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated to ensure that impacts to residents and other sensitive receptors are minimized. In addition, the widening of shoulders and realignment of highway segments may alter the existing noise contours for homes along State Route 16. An acoustical analysis should be performed to determine whether local residents would be affected by the proposed improvements and to develop necessary mitigation measures to reduce noise levels on sensitive receptors where appropriate.

Population and Housing: It is unclear from the Notice of Preparation whether or not some private residences will need to be removed to accommodate future proposed improvements. The EIR should determine if local residents would be displaced and evaluate the availability of similar housing within the immediate region.

Public Services: The proposed improvements could have an impact on local fire protection districts, either through the increased potential for wildfire due to construction, increased safety hazards resulting from traffic mitigation during construction, and/or delayed response time while construction occurs. The EIR should evaluate these potential impacts and work with local fire protection districts to develop appropriate mitigation. In addition, State Route 16 connects to numerous County roads. Where construction involves intersections with County-maintained roads, the EIR should evaluate the potential impacts to County roadside drainage conveyances and develop mitigation where appropriate. The temporary traffic controls necessary during construction activities to manage short-term congestion could delay the response time of County Sheriff's patrols and/or require supplemental law enforcement services to deal with traffic control. The EIR should evaluate these potential impacts and work with the local County Sheriff's Department to develop appropriate mitigation.

Transportation/Traffic: Yolo County is actively working with the Yolo Transportation District and Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians to expand bus service in the Capay Valley to accommodate casino employees. The proposed improvements should be compatible with alternative transportation, especially bus turnouts, to ensure that enhanced public transit is not impaired. In addition, construction activities associated with the proposed improvements could result in short-term congestion problems. The EIR should include mitigation measures that include coordinate traffic management plans to ensure the continued flow of vehicles in a safe and orderly manner.

Utilities and Service Systems: The proposed highway improvements would involve the addition of impermeable surfaces, which in turn could require upgrades and expansion to existing storm water drainage facilities which provide service to State Route 16. The EIR should evaluate the roadside drainage system and recommend measures to ensure that the future capacity is adequate to address the increased rate of surface runoff.

Improving traffic safety along State Route 16 is a high priority for Yolo County and staff strongly supports the efforts being made by Caltrans to address this pressing issue. However, the scope of the proposed project is significant and has the potential for both beneficial and adverse environmental impacts throughout the Madison-Esparto-Capay-Brooks region. We look forward to the Draft EIR and working together with Caltrans to address issues of mutual concern. If you have any questions about the issues discussed in this letter, please contact me by phone at (530) 666-8041 or by e-mail at david.morrison@yolocounty.org. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Morrison", with a stylized, flowing script.

David Morrison, Assistant Director

cc: Board of Supervisors
Vic Singh, CAO
John Bencomo, Director



July 15, 2003

Ms. Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Subject: Proposed Safety Improvements to SR16 in Yolo County, CA Notice of Preparation

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

Thank you for referring the above referenced notice to Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District for comment. The proposal includes safety improvements to SR16. The District looks forward to reviewing the draft environmental document that articulates the baseline air quality condition and evaluates the proposal's air quality impacts from construction.

The environmental document should evaluate the project under qualitative and quantitative terms. The project is considered significant if anticipated emissions exceed or contribute substantially to an existing or projected exceedance of an ambient air quality standard or expose sensitive receptors (e.g., children, athletes, elderly, sick populations) to substantial pollutant concentrations or toxic air contaminants. For CEQA purposes, an exceedance of ambient air quality standards can occur during construction and operation. A project or project phase is considered significant if:

- 1) The project's contribution exceeds the CAAQS; or
- 2) The project's contribution plus the background level exceeds the CAAQS, and
 - a) A sensitive receptor is located within a quarter-mile of the project, or
 - b) The project's contribution exceeds five percent of the CAAQS, or
 - c) The project's contribution exceeds 82 pounds per day (ppd) of Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) and Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x), 150 ppd of Respirable Particulate Matter (PM₁₀), and 550 ppd of Carbon Monoxide (CO).
- 3) Carcinogenic or air toxic contaminant emissions exceed or contribute to an exceedance of the District's action level for cancer (ten cases per one million persons).

If it is determined that a project is significant, or is close to being (within 10% of exceedance values), all sources of emissions should be identified and considered for emission forecasting. Emissions from these sources should be quantified in the CEQA document. Daily emissions should be estimated as ppd for each activity associated with the proposed project. Any emission reductions that will result from existing rules or ordinances should be deducted from the project's daily emissions total and included in the project's emissions baseline. The District does

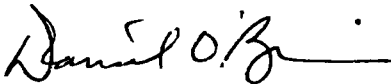
not consider compliance with its rules and regulations or other governmental regulations as CEQA mitigation.

Once quantification of emissions is completed, the results should be conveyed to the reader in concise and easily understandable manner. A practical format for documenting the project's impact is a table of estimated project emissions, effectiveness of mitigation measures, and net total project impact for the proposed project. The environmental document should compare total project emissions both before and after the application of mitigation measures to the existing localized significance thresholds. Below includes district rules and regulations that may apply to project construction.

| Rule Number | Title | Pollutant Affected |
|---------------|---|--------------------|
| Y-S AQMD 2.28 | Cutback and Emulsified Asphalt Paving Materials | ROG |
| Y-S AQMD 2.3 | Ringelmann Chart | PM10 |
| Y-S AQMD 2.33 | Adhesives and Sealants | ROG |
| Y-S AQMD 2.5 | Nuisance | Odor, Dust |
| Y-S AQMD 2.9 | Open Burning, Certain Materials | PM10 |

Please call me at (530) 757-3677, if you require additional information or clarification about the District's recommendations for adequate air quality impact assessment of the project.

Best regards,



Daniel P. O'Brien
Associate Air Quality Planner

cc: Larry Greene, Air Pollution Control Officer
Executive Director

Y O L O C O U N T Y

FLOOD CONTROL &
WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

July 15, 2003



Ms. Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, California 95833

Re: Comments to Notice of Preparation of a DEIR
 Proposed Safety Improvements to State Route 16 in Yolo County, CA

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

Thank you for sending the Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (District) a copy of Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the safety improvements proposed by Caltrans for State Route 16, including layouts of the draft project proposal.

The project description refers to raising State Route 16 from Esparto to Interstate 505 and states the flood impacts of the project will be handled to not adversely impact the floodplain consistent with the standards/criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). From the District's review of the project, the following comments are offered in relation to constructing the proposed project and impacts of the proposed project on flooding in the area.

1. Raising State Route 16

Raising the grade of State Route 16 from Esparto to Interstate 505 will require fill material. The project layouts do not identify where the material will be obtained or what the final grading will be upon completion of the project. As the District continues to look for opportunities to improve the operation of its system to serve water users, the District is interested in exploring the opportunity to locate a "borrow" site that would be mutually beneficial to both parties.

34274 State Highway 16
Woodland, CA 95695-9371
(530) 662-0265
FAX (530) 662-4982
www.yclcwcd.org

Tim O'Halloran
General Manager

Ms. McWilliams

July 15, 2003

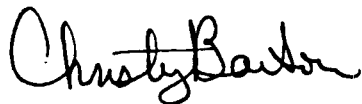
Page Two

2. Minimizing Flood Impacts

- a. The Town of Madison suffers from chronic flooding. Accordingly, the opportunity to reduce the risk of flooding should be a project objective rather than to merely "...minimize the impact of this fill material on the existing floodplain..." No information is presented to allow one to understand how Caltrans proposes to address the existing flooding problems and mitigate the impacts to flooding by the project. The District provided Caltrans with hydrologic/hydraulic models it developed for the area and would appreciate the opportunity to understand the consideration given to reducing the flood risks for the Town of Madison.
- b. It is not apparent from the document that Caltrans plans to submit an application to FEMA for a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR). The District suggests Caltrans process an application for a CLOMR through Yolo County as the administrator of the National Flood Insurance Program in advance of constructing the proposed project. This will allow the community to know, from a regulatory standpoint, the impact on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps prior to completing construction of the project.

The District looks forward to cooperating with Caltrans on the proposed project.

Sincerely yours,



Christy Barton

Assistant General Manager

C: Yolo County Supervisor Pollock
John Bencomo, Y. C. Public Works
John Stephens, Madison CSA
Tony Lopes, Madison CSD



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

July 18, 2003

DIVISION OF
LAND RESOURCE
PROTECTION

■ ■ ■

801 K STREET
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CALIFORNIA
95814

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consrv.ca.gov

■ ■ ■

GRAY DAVIS
GOVERNOR

Karen McWilliams
Chief Environmental Planner
Caltrans, North Region
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95628

RE: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report
(DEIR) for Safety Improvements to State Route 16 in Yolo County, CA
SCH#2003062089

The Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection (Division) monitors farmland conversion on a statewide basis and administers the California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act and other agricultural land conservation programs. We have reviewed the above NOP and offer the following recommendations for the DEIR with respect to the project's potential impacts on agricultural land.

The proposed project involves safety improvements to State Route (SR) 16 such as 20-foot clear recover zones with 8-foot shoulders, intersection improvements, realigning curves, road raising, and widening of bridges. Implementation of this project would require acquisition of agricultural areas for right-of-way and other purposes. Therefore, the Division recommends that, at a minimum, the following items be specifically addressed to document and treat the project impacts on agricultural land, including lands in agricultural preserves, and on agricultural land uses.

Agricultural Setting of the Project

The DEIR should describe the project setting in terms of the actual and potential agricultural productivity of the land. The Division's 2000 Yolo County Important Farmland Maps, which define farmland according to soil attributes and land use, are available for this purpose. In addition, we would recommend including the following items of information to characterize the agricultural land resource setting of the project.

- Current and past agricultural use of the project area. Include data on the types of crops grown, and crop yields and farmgate sales values.
- To help describe the full agricultural resource value of the soils on the site, we recommend the use of economic multipliers to assess the total contribution of the site's potential or actual agricultural production to the local, regional and state economies. State and Federal agencies such as the UC Cooperative Extension Service and USDA are sources of economic multipliers.

Project Impacts on Agricultural Land

- Type, amount, and location of farmland conversion resulting directly from project implementation.
- Farmland conversion resulting indirectly from the project, e.g., will increase in road capacity result in further growth in the region.
- Impacts on current and future agricultural operations; e.g., land-use conflicts, increases in land values and taxes, bisecting of fields, etc.
- Incremental project impacts leading to cumulatively considerable impacts on agricultural land. This would include impacts from the proposed project as well as impacts from past, current and probable future projects.

In addition to the Federal Farmland Impact Rating, impacts on agricultural resources may be quantified and qualified by use of the Division's California version of the USDA Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model, a semi-quantitative rating system for establishing the environmental significance of project-specific impacts on farmland. The model may also be used to rate the relative value of alternative project sites. The LESA Model is available on the Division's website listed on Page Four.

Williamson Act Lands

A project is deemed to be of statewide, regional or area-wide significance if it will result in cancellation of a Williamson Act contract for a parcel of 100 or more acres [California Code of Regulations Section 15206(b)(3)]. Since lands under Williamson Act contract exist on or adjacent to the project area, the Department recommends that the following information be provided in the DEIR:

- A map detailing the location of agricultural preserves and contracted land within each preserve. The DEIR should also tabulate the number of Williamson Act acres, according to land type (e.g., prime or non-prime agricultural land), which could be impacted directly or indirectly by the project.
- A discussion of Williamson Act contracts that may be terminated in order to accommodate the project. The DEIR should discuss the impacts that termination of Williamson Act contracts would have on nearby properties also under contract;

i.e., growth-inducing impacts (in the sense that the removal of contract protection not only lifts a barrier to development, but results in higher property taxes, and thus, an incentive to shift to a more intensive land use, such as urban development.)

- Public acquisitions of lands under Williamson Act contract for public purposes require notice to the Department of Conservation and specified findings pursuant to Government Code Sections 51291-51292. (The specific requirements are noted in an enclosure.) Note that if the public agency does not use the land for the original acquisition purpose and/or the land is returned to private ownership, the Director of the Department of Conservation must be notified. Notices should be mailed to the address below.

Darryl Young, Director
Department of Conservation
c/o Division of Land Resource Protection
801 K Street, MS 13-71
Sacramento, CA 95814-3528

Mitigation Measures and Alternatives

Feasible alternatives to the project's location or configuration that would lessen or avoid farmland conversion impacts should be considered in the DEIR. The Division has compiled an annotated listing of approximately 30 "conservation tools" that have been used to conserve or mitigate project impacts on agricultural land. This compilation report may be requested from the Division.

One of the tools described in the report is the purchase of agricultural conservation easements on land of at least equal quality and size as partial compensation for the direct loss of agricultural land, as well as for the mitigation of growth inducing and cumulative impacts on agricultural land. We highlight this measure because of its growing acceptance and use by lead agencies as mitigation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Mitigation using conservation easements can be implemented by at least two alternative approaches: the outright purchase of conservation easements tied to the project, or via the donation of mitigation fees to a local, regional or statewide organization or agency, including land trusts and conservancies, whose purpose includes the purchase, holding and maintenance of agricultural conservation easements. Whatever the approach, the conversion of agricultural land should be deemed an impact of at least regional significance and the search for mitigation lands conducted regionally, and not limited strictly to lands within Yolo County.

Ms. Karen McWilliams
July 18, 2003
Page 4

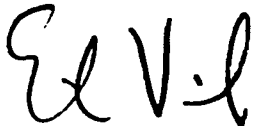
Information about conservation easements is available on the Division's website or by contacting Charles Tyson, Program Manager for the Division's California Farmland Conservancy Program, at (916) 324-0862. The Division's website address is:

<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/>

Of course, the use of conservation easements is only one form of mitigation that should be considered. Any other feasible mitigation measures should also be considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NOP. If you have questions on our comments, or require technical assistance or information on agricultural land conservation, please contact the Division at 801 K Street, MS 13-71, Sacramento, California 95814; or, phone (916) 324-0850.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Vink', with a stylized, cursive script.

Erik Vink
Assistant Director

Enclosure

cc: Yolo County RCD
221 West Court Street, Suite 1
Woodland, CA 95695

Public Acquisitions of Lands Under Williamson Act Contract Government Code Section 51290 to 51295

51290. (a) It is the policy of the state to avoid, whenever practicable, the location of any federal, state, or local public improvements and any improvements of public utilities, and the acquisition of land therefore, in agricultural preserves.
- (b) It is further the policy of the state that whenever it is necessary to locate such an improvement within an agricultural preserve, the improvement shall, whenever practicable, be located upon land other than land under a contract pursuant to this chapter.
- (c) It is further the policy of the state that any agency or entity proposing to locate such an improvement shall, in considering the relative costs of parcels of land and the development of improvements, give consideration to the value to the public, as indicated in Article 2 (commencing with Section 51220), of land, and particularly prime agricultural land, within an agricultural preserve.

51290.5. As used in this chapter, "public improvement" means facilities or interests in real property, including easements, rights-of-way, and interests in fee title, owned by a public agency or person, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 51291.

51291. (a) As used in this section and Sections 51292 and 51295, (1) "public agency" means any department or agency of the United States or the state, and any county, city, school district, or other local public district, agency, or entity, and (2) "person" means any person authorized to acquire property by eminent domain.

(b) Except as provided in Section 51291.5, whenever it appears that land within an agricultural preserve may be required by a public agency or person for a public use, the public agency or person shall advise the Director of Conservation and the local governing body responsible for the administration of the preserve of its intention to consider the location of a public improvement within the preserve.

In accordance with Section 51290, the notice shall include an explanation of the preliminary consideration of Section 51292, and give a general description, in text or by diagram, of the agricultural preserve land proposed for acquisition, and a copy of any applicable contract created under this chapter. The Director of Conservation shall forward to the Secretary of Food and Agriculture, a copy of any material received from the public agency or person relating to the proposed acquisition.

Within 30 days thereafter, the Director of Conservation and the local governing body shall forward to the appropriate public agency or person concerned their comments with respect to the effect of the location of the public improvement on the land within the agricultural preserve and those comments shall be considered by the public agency or person. In preparing those comments, the Director of Conservation shall consider issues related to agricultural land use, including, but not limited to,

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matters related to the effects of the proposal on the conversion of adjacent or nearby agricultural land to nonagricultural uses, and shall consult with, and incorporate the comments of, the Secretary of Food and Agriculture on any other matters related to agricultural operations. The failure by any person or public agency, other than a state agency, to comply with the requirements of this section shall be admissible in evidence in any litigation for the acquisition of that land or involving the allocation of funds or the construction of the public improvement. This subdivision does not apply to the erection, construction, alteration, or maintenance of gas, electric, piped subterranean water or wastewater, or communication utility facilities within an agricultural preserve if that preserve was established after the submission of the location of those facilities to the city or county for review or approval.

(c) When land in an agricultural preserve is acquired by a public entity, the public entity shall notify the Director of Conservation within 10 working days. The notice shall include a general explanation of the decision and the findings made pursuant to Section 51292. If different from that previously provided pursuant to subdivision (b), the notice shall also include a general description, in text or by diagram, of the agricultural preserve land acquired and a copy of any applicable contract created under this chapter.

(d) If, after giving the notice required under subdivisions (b) and (c) and before the project is completed within an agricultural preserve, the public agency or person proposes any significant change in the public improvement, it shall give notice of the changes to the Director of Conservation and the local governing body responsible for the administration of the preserve. Within 30 days thereafter, the Director of Conservation and the local governing body may forward to the public agency or person their comments with respect to the effect of the change to the public improvement on the land within the preserve and the compliance of the changed public improvements with this article. Those comments shall be considered by the public agency or person, if available within the time limits set by this subdivision.

(e) Any action or proceeding regarding notices or findings required by this article filed by the Director of Conservation or the local governing body administering the agricultural preserve shall be governed by Section 51294.

51291.5. The notice requirements of subdivision (b) of Section 51291 shall not apply to the acquisition of land for the erection, construction, or alteration of gas, electric, piped subterranean water or wastewater, or communication facilities.

51292. No public agency or person shall locate a public improvement within an agricultural preserve unless the following findings are made:

(a) The location is not based primarily on a consideration of the lower cost of acquiring land in an agricultural preserve.

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(b) If the land is agricultural land covered under a contract pursuant to this chapter for any public improvement, that there is no other land within or outside the preserve on which it is reasonably feasible to locate the public improvement.

51293. Section 51292 shall not apply to:

(a) The location or construction of improvements where the board or council administering the agricultural preserve approves or agrees to the location thereof, except when the acquiring agency and administering agency are the same entity.

(b) The acquisition of easements within a preserve by the board or council administering the preserve.

(c) The location or construction of any public utility improvement which has been approved by the Public Utilities Commission.

(d) The acquisition of either (1) temporary construction easements for public utility improvements, or (2) an interest in real property for underground public utility improvements. This subdivision shall apply only where the surface of the land subject to the acquisition is returned to the condition and use that immediately predated the construction of the public improvement, and when the construction of the public utility improvement will not significantly impair agricultural use of the affected contracted parcel or parcels.

(e) The location or construction of the following types of improvements, which are hereby determined to be compatible with or to enhance land within an agricultural preserve:

(1) Flood control works, including channel rectification and alteration.

(2) Public works required for fish and wildlife enhancement and preservation.

(3) Improvements for the primary benefit of the lands within the preserve.

(f) Improvements for which the site or route has been specified by the Legislature in a manner that makes it impossible to avoid the acquisition of land under contract.

(g) All state highways on routes as described in Sections 301 to 622, inclusive, of the Streets and Highways Code, as those sections read on October 1, 1965.

(h) All facilities which are part of the State Water Facilities as described in subdivision (d) of Section 12934 of the Water Code, except facilities under paragraph (6) of subdivision (d) of that section.

(i) Land upon which condemnation proceedings have been commenced prior to October 1, 1965.

(j) The acquisition of a fee interest or conservation easement for a term of at least 10 years, in order to restrict the land to agricultural or open space uses as defined by subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 51201.

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51293.1. Any public agency or person requiring land in an agricultural preserve for a use which has been determined by a city or county to be a "compatible use" pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 51201 in that agricultural preserve shall not be excused from the provisions of subdivision (b) of Section 51291 if the agricultural preserve was established before the location of the improvement of a public utility was submitted to the city, county, or Public Utilities Commission for agreement or approval and that compatible use shall not come within the provisions of Section 51293 unless the location of the improvement is approved or agreed to pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 51293 or the compatible use is listed in Section 51293.

51294. Section 51292 shall be enforceable only by mandamus proceedings by the local governing body administering the agricultural preserve or the Director of Conservation. However, as applied to condemnors whose determination of necessity is not conclusive by statute, evidence as to the compliance of the condemnor with Section 51292 shall be admissible on motion of any of the parties in any action otherwise authorized to be brought by the landowner or in any action against the landowner.

51294.1. After 30 days have elapsed following its action, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 51291, advising the Director of Conservation and the local governing body of a county or city administering an agricultural preserve of its intention to consider the location of a public improvement within such agricultural preserve, a public agency proposing to acquire land within an agricultural preserve for water transmission facilities which will extend into more than one county, may file the proposed route of the facilities with each county or city administering an agricultural preserve into which the facilities will extend and request each county or city to approve or agree to the location of the facilities or the acquisition of the land therefore. Upon approval or agreement, the provisions of Section 51292 shall not apply to the location of the proposed water transmission facility or the acquisition of land therefore in any county or city which has approved or agreed to the location or acquisition.

51294.2. If any local governing body administering an agricultural preserve within 90 days after receiving a request pursuant to Section 51294.1 has not approved or agreed to the location of water transmission facilities as provided in Section 51294.1 or in subdivision (a) of Section 51293, the public agency making such request may file an action against such local governing body in the superior court of one of the counties within which any such body has failed to approve the location of facilities or the acquisition of land therefore, to determine whether the public agency proposing the location or acquisition has complied with the requirements of Section 51292. If the court should so determine, the provisions of Section 51292 shall not apply to the location of water transmission facilities, nor the acquisition of land therefore, in any of the counties into which they shall extend, and no writ of mandamus shall be issued in relation thereto pursuant to Section 51294.

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For the purposes of this section, the county selected for commencing such action is the proper county for the trial of such proceedings. In determining whether the public agency has complied with the requirements of Section 51292, the court shall consider the alignment, functioning and operation of the entire transmission facility.

Courts shall give any action brought under the provisions of this section preference over all other civil actions therein, to the end that such actions shall be quickly heard and determined.

51295. When any action in eminent domain for the condemnation of the fee title of an entire parcel of land subject to a contract is filed, or when that land is acquired in lieu of eminent domain for a public improvement by a public agency or person, or whenever there is any such action or acquisition by the federal government or any person, instrumentality, or agency acting under the authority or power of the federal government, the contract shall be deemed null and void as to the land actually being condemned, or so acquired as of the date the action is filed, and for the purposes of establishing the value of the land, the contract shall be deemed never to have existed.

Upon the termination of the proceeding, the contract shall be null and void for all land actually taken or acquired.

When an action to condemn or acquire less than all of a parcel of land subject to a contract is commenced, the contract shall be deemed null and void as to the land actually condemned or acquired and shall be disregarded in the valuation process only as to the land actually being taken, unless the remaining land subject to contract will be adversely affected by the condemnation, in which case the value of that damage shall be computed without regard to the contract.

When an action to condemn or acquire an interest that is less than the fee title of an entire parcel or any portion thereof of land subject to a contract is commenced, the contract shall be deemed null and void as to that interest and, for the purpose of establishing the value of only that interest, shall be deemed never to have existed, unless the remaining interests in any of the land subject to the contract will be adversely affected, in which case the value of that damage shall be computed without regard to the contract.

The land actually taken shall be removed from the contract. Under no circumstances shall land be removed that is not actually taken for a public improvement, except that when only a portion of the land or less than a fee interest in the land is taken or acquired, the contract may be canceled with respect to the remaining portion or interest upon petition of either party and pursuant to the provisions of Article 5 (commencing with Section 51280).

For the purposes of this section, a finding by the board or council that no authorized use may be made of the land if the contract is continued on the remaining portion or interest in the land, may satisfy the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 51282.

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If, after acquisition, the acquiring public agency determines that it will not for any reason actually locate on that land or any part thereof, the public improvement for which the land was acquired, before returning the land to private ownership, the public agency shall give written notice to the Director of Conservation and the local governing body responsible for the administration of the preserve, and the land shall be reenrolled in a new contract or encumbered by an enforceable deed restriction with terms at least as restrictive as those provided by this chapter. The duration of the restriction shall be determined by subtracting the length of time the land was held by the acquiring public agency or person from the number of years that remained on the original contract at the time of acquisition.

Esparto Community Services District

Dedicated to Safe Water and Responsible Waste Management

P.O. Box 349 ~ 16960 Yolo Ave ~ Esparto, Ca 95627 ~ (530) 787-4502 ~ Fax (530) 787-4219

June 25, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Cal-trans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, Ca 95833

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

I would like to address, on behalf of the Esparto Community Services District, our concerns regarding the Highway 16 expansion.

Mr. David Morrison, Assistant Director of Planning for Yolo County, first informed the District in early February of possible Highway 16 improvements. The improvements included a widening of the right-of-way and diversion of surface waters.

Immediately thereafter I spoke with several staff members at Cal-trans about potential problems involving Highway 16 and our sewer ponds.

Among the issues that I addressed was the fact that some of the ground involved is the planned location of our future pond expansion. More importantly I brought to their attention the fact that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board was requiring the District to install monitoring wells. I stated two of these wells would be directly impacted and rendered useless if Highway 16 was improved as described.

I was told to continue with the construction of the wells and they have now been completed.

As a District we continue to have concerns, but more importantly, we must also continue to stay within the guidelines of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and our governing regulation WDR Order No. 5-01-112. Because of this any decisions involving our land would require the Control Board's involvement as well.

We hope that we can help work toward a solution that works well for all involved. Feel free to contact me with any additional concerns or questions.

Sincerely,



David M. Herbst-General Manager/Superintendent.
Esparto Community Services District



"When You're Going Somewhere"

City of Davis • City of West Sacramento • City of Winters
City of Woodland • County of Yolo
Ex Officio - CalTrans District 3 • University of California - Davis

Yolo County Transportation District
350 Industrial Way
Woodland, CA 95776
(530) 661-0816 FAX:(530) 661-1732
www.yolobus.com

June 24, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
CalTrans
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS -15
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: Notice of Preparation for State Route 16 Safety Improvements Environmental Impact Report

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Notice of Preparation for the above-referenced project. We will be commenting as both the Congestion Management Agency and as the operator of the Yolobus transit system. Staff from the Yolo County Transportation District have been participating in the community meetings for both this project and the Capay Valley Vision corridor study, and this agency supported the programming of STIP funds for the Esparto/Capay traffic calming study. We have the following comments for this NOP:

1. The impact on the flood plain of filling and raising State Route 16 between I505 and Esparto may have special consequences for other jurisdictions in the flood plain, and the communities of Esparto and Madison. We feel these impacts, how to reduce them and the standards/criteria discussion relative to FEMA needs to be discussed in detail.
2. We feel the relationship of this project to the other planning activities going on in the Capay Valley, especially the traffic calming, the corridor study, and the agreement between the County of Yolo and the Rumsey Rancheria Tribe relative to the casino expansion should be explored, especially in considering traffic mitigations currently being considered.
3. As the Congestion Management Agency we are interested in any improvement in level of service on this state highway. We hope the traffic study will identify improvements, if any. In addition, since much of the traffic comes from not only I505 but also I5 through Woodland, impacts on local traffic should also be explored.
4. Finally, transit services operate along State Route 16 between Woodland and the casino at Brooks, and may increase depending upon mitigations included in the county-tribe agreement. Impacts to transit service during construction need to be explored.

I hope these comments are helpful as you prepare the EIR. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me at 530-661-0816, ext. 18.

Sincerely,

Martie L. Dote
Senior Transportation Planner



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

Robert Schneider, Chair

Winston H. Hickox
Secretary for
Environmental
Protection

Sacramento Main Office
Internet Address: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb5>
3443 Roubier Road, Suite A, Sacramento, California 95827-3003
Phone (916) 255-3000 • FAX (916) 255-3015



Gray Davis
Governor

19 June 2003

Ms. Karen McWilliams
California Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Management, S2
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

REVIEW OF NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS TO STATE ROUTE 16, , CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA), YOLO COUNTY

As a Responsible Agency, as defined by CEQA, we have reviewed the Notice of Preparation of the draft environmental impact report for the proposed safety improvements to State Route 16 in Yolo County. Based on our review, we have the following comments regarding the proposed project.

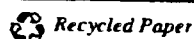
Storm Water

A NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities, Order No. 99-28-DWQ is required when a project involves clearing, grading, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation. On March 10, 2003 as part of the new Phase II storm water regulations, all construction activity that disturbs one acre or greater or is part of a larger common plan of development or sale will require a construction storm water permit. A Construction Activities Storm Water General Permit must be obtained prior to construction.

Water Quality Certification - Wetlands (*Where it is possible that wetlands will be disturbed by a project*)

If a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) permit is required due to the disturbance of wetlands, then Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Regional Board prior to initiation of project activities. Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act requires that the project proponent for any project that impacts surface waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands) must request a 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Board. Water Quality Certification must be obtained prior to initiation of project activities. The proponent must follow the ACOE 404(b)(1) Guidance to assure approval of their 401 Water Quality Certification application. The guidelines are as follows:

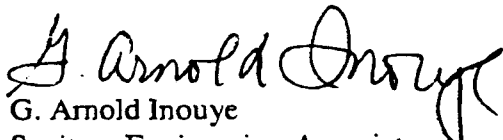
California Environmental Protection Agency



1. **Avoidance** (Is the project the least environmentally damaging *practicable* alternative?)
2. **Minimization** (Does the project minimize any adverse effects to the impacted wetlands?)
3. **Mitigation** (Does the project mitigate to assure a no net loss of functional values?)

Also, enclosed for your information is a copy of "*General Comments*" which provide additional details regarding Regional Board responsibilities.

If you any questions regarding the above information please contact me at (916) 255-3112.


G. Arnold Inouye
Sanitary Engineering Associate
Storm Water Unit

Enc: General Comments

cc: Mr. Dean Becker, Yolo County Planning and Public Works Department, Woodland



Winston H. Hickox
*Secretary for
Environmental
Protection*

California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Central Valley Region

Robert Schneider, Chair



Gray Davis
Governor

Sacramento Main Office
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3443 Routier Road, Suite A, Sacramento, California 95827-3003
Phone (916) 255-3000 • FAX (916) 255-3015

General Comments

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) is charged with the protection of the Waters of the State of California in the Central Valley Region, including wetlands and stormwater quality. The Regional Board is responsible for administering the regulations established by the Federal Clean Water Act. Additionally, the California Water Code establishes broad state authority for regulation of water quality. The Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) establishes water quality objectives for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins and explains the Regional Board's strategy for regulating water quality. The Basin Plan also describes the range of responses available to the Regional Board with regard to actions and proposed actions that degrade or potentially degrade the beneficial uses of the Waters of the State of California.

NPDES

Water quality degradation is regulated by the Federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program, established by the Clean Water Act, which controls and reduces pollutants to water bodies from point and non-point discharges. In California, the program is administered by the California Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The Regional Board issues NPDES permits for discharges to water bodies in the Central Valley Region, including Municipal (area- or county-wide) Stormwater Discharge Permits.

Projects disturbing more than five acres of land during construction must be covered under the State NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (General Permit). On March 10, 2003 as part of the new Phase II storm water regulations, all construction activity that disturbs one acre or greater or is part of a larger common plan of development or sale will also require coverage under the General Permit. This can be accomplished by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) with the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality (State Board). An NOI and the General Permit can be obtained from the State Board at (916) 341-5536 or by visiting the stormwater website located at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/stormwtr>. The project sponsor must propose and implement controls measures that are consistent with the General Permit and with the recommendations and policies of the local agency and the RWQCB.

Projects that include facilities with discharges of Storm Water Associated with Industrial Activity must be covered under the State NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Industrial Activity. This may be accomplished by also filing an NOI and contacting the State Board at (916) 341-5536 or by visiting the stormwater website located at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/stormwtr>. The project sponsor must propose control measures that are consistent with this, and with recommendations and policies of the local agency and the RWQCB. In a few cases, the project sponsor

California Environmental Protection Agency



may apply for (or the RWQCB may require) issuance of an individual (industry- or facility-specific) permit.

Dewatering Permit

The proponent may be required to file a Dewatering Permit covered under Waste Discharge Requirements General Order for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters Permit, Order No. 5-00-175 (NPDES CAG995001) provided they do not contain significant quantities of pollutants and are either (1) four months or less in duration, or (2) the average dry weather discharge does not exceed 0.25 mgd:

- a. Well development water
- b. Construction dewatering
- c. Pump/well testing
- d. Pipeline/tank pressure testing
- e. Pipeline/tank flushing or dewatering
- f. Condensate discharges
- g. Water Supply system discharges
- h. Miscellaneous dewatering/low threat discharges

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Wetlands

Wetlands enhance water quality through such natural functions as flood and erosion control, stream bank stabilization, and filtration and purification of contaminants. Wetlands also provide critical habitat for hundreds of species of fish, birds, and other wildlife, offer open space, and provide many recreational opportunities. Water quality impacts occur in wetlands from construction structures in waterways, dredging, filling, and altering drainage to wetlands.

The Regional Board must certify that any permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (covering, dredging, or filling of Waters of the United States, including wetlands) complies with state water quality standards, or waive such certification. Section 401 Water Quality Certification is necessary for all 404 Nationwide permits, reporting and non-reporting, as well as individual permits.

All projects must be evaluated for the presence of jurisdictional wetlands and other Waters of the State. Destruction of or impact to these waters should be avoided. If the proposed project impacts wetlands or other Waters of the State and the project applicant is unable to demonstrate that the project was unable to avoid these adverse impacts, water quality certification will most likely be denied. 401 Certification may also be denied based on significant adverse impacts to wetlands or other Waters of the State. If a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) permit is required for the project, then Water Quality Certification must be obtained prior to initiation of project activities. The proponent must follow the ACOE 404(b)(1) Guidance to assure approval of their 401 Water Quality Certification application. The guidelines are as follows:

1. **Avoidance** (Is the project the least environmentally damaging *practicable* alternative?)
2. **Minimization** (Does the project minimize any adverse effects to the impacted wetlands)
3. **Mitigation** (Does the project mitigate to assure a no net loss of functional values?)

If, after avoidance and minimization guidelines are considered and wetland impacts are still anticipated:

- Determine functional losses and gains (both permanent and temporal; both direct and indirect)
- Conduct adequate baselines of wetland functions including vegetation, wildlife, hydrology, soils, and water quality
- Attempt to create/restore the same wetland type that is impacted, in the same watershed
- Work with a regional context to maximize benefits for native fish, wildlife, vegetation, as well as for water quality, and hydrology
- Use native species and materials whenever possible
- Document all efforts made to avoid the minimize adverse wetland impacts
- Be prepared to develop performance criteria and to track those for between 5 to 20 years
- Be prepared to show project success based on achieving wetland functions
- If the project fails, be prepared to repeat the same process (via financial assurance), with additional acreage added for temporal losses
- Specify how the mitigation project will be maintained in perpetuity and who will be responsible for the maintenance

Storm Water Quality Control

Storm water is the major source of fresh water to creeks and waterways. Storm water quality is affected by the variety of land uses and the pollutants generated by these activities. Development and construction activities cause both site-specific and cumulative water quality impacts. Water quality degradation may occur during construction due to discharges of sediment, chemicals, and wastes to nearby storm drains and creeks. Water quality degradation may occur after construction is complete, due to discharges of petroleum hydrocarbons, oil, grease, and metals from vehicles, pesticides and fertilizers from landscaping, and bacteria from pets and people. Runoff may be concentrated and storm water flow increased by newly developed impervious surfaces, which will mobilize and transport pollutants deposited on these surfaces to storm drains and creeks. Changes in runoff quantity or velocity may cause erosion or siltation in streams. Cumulatively, these discharges will increase pollutant load in creeks and wetlands within the local watershed, and ultimately in the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins.

Project impacts should be minimized by developing and implementing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is required by the General Permit. The SWPPP should be consistent with the terms of the General Permit, policies and recommendations of the local agency (city or county) and the recommendations of the RWQCB. The SWPPPs should also be required for projects that may have impacts, but which are not required to obtain an NPDES permit. Preparation of a SWPPP should be a condition of development. Implementation of the SWPPP should be enforced during the construction period via appropriate options such as citations, stop work orders, or withholding occupancy permits.

Impacts identified should be avoided and minimized by developing and implementing the types of controls explained in the San Francisco Regional Board's Field Manual available from the Friends of the

San Francisco Estuary at (510) 286-0924 or visiting their website at www.abag.ca.gov/bayarea/sfep/about/friends

Site Planning

The project should minimize impacts from the project development by incorporating appropriate site planning concepts. This should be accomplished by designing and proposing site planning options as early in the project planning phase as possible. Appropriate site planning concepts to include, but are not limited to the following:

- Phase construction to limit areas of period of impacts
- Minimize directly connected impervious areas
- Preserve local topography, existing drainage courses and existing vegetation
- Locate construction and structures as far as possible from streams, wetlands, drainage areas, etc.
- Provide undeveloped, vegetative buffer zones between development and streams, wetland, drainage areas, etc.
- Reduce paved area through cluster development, narrower streets, use of porous pavement and/or retaining natural surfaces
- Minimize the use of gutters and curbs which concentrate and direct runoff to impermeable surfaces
- Use existing vegetation and create new vegetated areas to promote infiltration
- Design and layout communities to reduce reliance on cars
- Include green areas for people to walk their pets, thereby reducing build-up of bacteria, worms, viruses, nutrients, etc. in impermeable areas, or institute ordinances requiring owners to collect pets excrement
- Incorporate low-maintenance landscaping
- Design and layout streets and storm drain systems to facilitate easy maintenance and cleaning
- Consider the need for runoff collection and treatment systems
- Label storm drains to discourage dumping of pollutants into them

Erosion

The project should minimize erosion and control sediment during and after construction. This should be done by developing and implementing an erosion control plan, or equivalent plan. This plan should be included in the SWPPP. The plan should specify all control measures that will be used or which are anticipated to be used, including but not limited to the following:

- Limit access routes and stabilize access points
- Stabilize denuded areas as soon as possible with seeding, mulching, or other effective methods
- Protect adjacent properties with vegetative buffer strips, sediment barriers, or other effective methods
- Delineate clearing limits, easements, setbacks, sensitive areas, vegetation and drainage courses by marking them in the field
- Stabilize and prevent erosion from temporary conveyance channels outlets

- Use sediment controls and filtration to remove sediment from water generated by dewatering or collected on-site during construction. For large sites, stormwater settling basins will often be necessary

Chemicals and Waste Management

The project should minimize impacts from chemicals and wastes used or generated during construction. This should be done by developing and implementing a plan or set of control measures. The plan or control measures should be included in the SWPPP. The plan to specify all control measures that will be used or which are anticipated to be used, including, but not limited to the following:

- Designate specific areas of the site, away from streams or storm drains inlets, for storage, preparation, and disposal of building materials, chemical products and wastes
- Store stockpiled material and wastes under a roof or plastic sheeting
- Store containers of paint, chemicals, solvents, and other hazardous materials stored in containers under cover during rainy periods
- Berm around storage areas to prevent contact with runoff
- Cover open dumpsters securely with plastic sheeting, a tarp, or other cover during rainy periods
- Designate specific areas of the site, away from streams or storm drain inlets, for auto and equipment parking and for routine vehicle equipment maintenance
- Routinely maintain all vehicles and heavy equipment to avoid leaks
- Perform major maintenance, repair, and vehicle equipment washing off-site, or in designated and controlled areas on-site
- Collect used motor oil, radiator coolant or other fluid with drip pans or drop cloths
- Store and label spent fluids carefully prior to recycling or proper disposal
- Sweep up spilled dry materials (cement, mortar, fertilizers, etc.) immediately - - do not use water to wash them away
- Clean up liquid spills on paved or impermeable surfaces using "dry" cleanup methods (e.g. absorbent materials, cat litter, rags) and dispose of cleanup materials properly
- Clean up spills on dirt areas by digging up and properly disposing the soil
- Keep paint removal wastes, fresh concrete, cement mortars, cleared vegetation, and demolition wastes out of gutters, streams, and storm drains by using proper containment and disposal

Post Construction

The project should minimize impacts from pollutants that may be generated by the project following construction, when the project is complete and occupied or in operation. These pollutants may include: sediment, bacteria, metals, solvents, oil, grease, and pesticides, all of which are typically generated during the life of a residential, commercial, or industrial project after construction has ceased. This should be done by developing and implementing a plan and set of control measures. The plan or control measures should be included in the SWPPP.

The plan should specify all control measures that will be used or which are anticipated to be used, including, but not limited to, the source controls and treatment controls. Additional source of information that should be consulted for BMP selection includes the *California Storm Water Best*

Management Practice Handbook available through Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association. Visit their website at www.basmaa.org or via e-mail at info@basmaa.org.

July 21, 2003

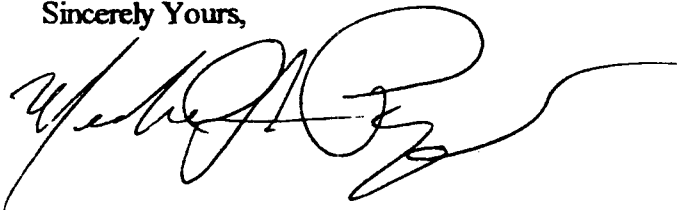
Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr., MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

We urge you to abandon the Caltrans plan for highway 16 between Madison and Brooks. Ours is one of the houses you plan to tear down. What we need is small improvement to the existing road, not a freeway to the casino. Make the shoulders 2-3 feet wider, on the existing roadbed. Put in a few gravel turnouts for farm equipment, and reduce speeds on hills and big curves in the road.

This is an agricultural community and the road needs first and foremost to match the environment and mainstay of the people who live here. The road should not be here for the benefits of patrons to the facility of a group that does not pay taxes or is required to obey the environmental or zoning laws of the County.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Plyer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Plyer
20172 RD 79A
CAPAY CA. 95607

Barbara and Hans Herren
23057 State Highway 16
Capay, Ca 95607

July 17, 2001

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Karen_McWilliams@dot.ca.gov

Re: comments on the notice of preparation for environmental impact report
EA: 03-0C4700
Yolo-16
Safety Project

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

We wish to submit the following comments on this project.

The project is called a "safety project", yet seems to be targeted toward making Highway 16 into a highway which can handle a larger capacity of traffic, rather than increasing safety. The single most effective way of increasing safety is to reduce the speed limit. Caltrans staff themselves have admitted that having a flatter highway with broader shoulders and more gradual curves will result in higher average speeds. The project is flawed in its design from the beginning, in reaching a goal of safety.

We believe also that rather than make Highway 16 into a larger road, an alternate route to take customers to the casino should be sought. This should be considered as one possible option, and the impacts of this versus developing Highway 16 into a larger capacity, faster highway with residents trying to live with the traffic, noise, and air pollution should be weighed. We attach a map outlining where we believe an alternate road could be built, for a similar budget as it will take to improve highway 16. We understand that Caltrans has only funds for improving the safety of existing roads, not for building new roads, yet this is failure of the planning process, if this alternative could be better but cannot be considered because of Caltrans' mandate.

Among the factors which must be addressed in the EIR are:

Community impacts; loss of the agricultural character of the valley, with a high-speed, high-volume highway running through it. Loss of several historical buildings.

Special -status Animal and Plant species: the notice says "it is unlikely that these (plant) species will occur in the project areas"; yet the existing highway goes through some of the finest riparian oak forests in the region. Rather than assume that the species do not occur, a thorough survey must be undertaken.

Archeological Resources: as noted, very little of the project area has been surveyed, and this survey must be conducted prior to the EIR.

Air quality and Noise: the notice is quite conservative in the estimation of the impacts of noise and air pollution. It is unclear to us why the notice only mentions short-term air quality impacts associated with the construction. Surely, developing a higher capacity highway means more vehicular traffic and more air pollution in the valley. Has this impact not got to be addressed in the EIR? The costs of these impacts must be factored into the approval, or not, of the project. Similarly for noise pollution, it is surely not sufficient to simply state that noise pollution will be abated by the project. If the noise levels require an expensive and unscentic abatement program, these costs should be evaluated in the course of the EIR.

Our understanding of an EIR is that it is not merely to abate all environmental impacts caused by a project, but should be a decision tool, weighing options and costs. In this respect, the EIR should consider lower speeds, relocation of the access road to the Casino, as two alternate options, and should evaluate the full and complete costs to the community, to local biodiversity, to cultural diversity, and air and noise pollution, in assessing the impacts of the proposed project.

We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'B. Herren' and the signature on the right is 'H. Herren'.

Barbara G. Herren, Ph.D.
Hans R. Herren, Ph.D.



Karen McWilliams
07/24/2003 09:28 AM

To: Trini Campbell <riverdog@yolo.com>
cc: Che McFarlin/D03/Caltrans/CAGov@DOT
Subject: Re: NOP SR 16 SIP

Dear Ms. Campbell

Thank you for your comments and questions. They will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Report/Statement.

Karen McWilliams
Office of Environmental Management, S2
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 274-0631
Fax (916) 274-0602
Trini Campbell <riverdog@yolo.com>



Trini Campbell
<riverdog@yolo.com>
07/23/2003 04:23 PM

To: <karen_mcwilliams@dot.ca.gov>
cc:
Subject: NOP SR 16 SIP

July 23, 2003

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

The NOP for the SR 16 SIP does not acknowledge proposed housing developments to the west of Esparto. Currently, plans are being considered by the Esparto Citizens Advisory Committee to develop the parcel between the Parker Place residential area and County Road 85B with anticipated conversion of agricultural land to residentially zoned land.

Specifically, the western border of the town of Esparto is currently expected to move towards CR 85b with the construction of a new housing development. A new housing development is being planned between Parker Place and CR 85b. The westward growth of the town is scheduled and has been discussed by the Esparto Citizens Advisory Committee. Caltrans should give serious consideration to the speed design of this stretch of the SIP in order to factor in the residential growth of Esparto and the egress and ingress flows of those pending residential developments. The traffic calming plans should be applied to areas along SR 16 that are slated for future residential growth. The SR 16 SIP should not extend east of CR 85b as this area will developed residentially in the near future and the edge of the Esparto Town boundary is extending beyond where its current boundary.

To ensure that future residential areas have safe access to SR 16, reduced speed limits along this short stretch of SR 16 between the Parker Place access street and CR 85b should be evaluated by Caltrans Traffic Operations for speed limit reduction for safety implementation and treated outside of the SR 16 SIP scope, as the rest of the town of Esparto with the Traffic Calming plans.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment at this early phase of transportation planning along the SR 16 corridor.

Trini Campbell
P.O. Box 42
Guinda, CA 95637
530-796-3802



Karen McWilliams
07/24/2003 09:24 AM

To: Hoes Down Celebration <info@hoesdown.org>
cc: Che McFarlin/D03/Caltrans/CAGov@DOT
Subject: Re: SR 16 SIP comments

Dear Paul Muller,
Thank you for your excellent questions. We will certainly address them in the Environmental Impact Report/Statement.

Karen McWilliams
Office of Environmental Management, S2
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 274-0631
Fax (916) 274-0602
Hoes Down Celebration <info@hoesdown.org>



Hoes Down
Celebration
<info@hoesdown.org>
07/23/2003 04:19 AM

To: <karen_mcwilliams@dot.ca.gov>
cc: Cathy Sumatsu <mrink@mindspring.com>
Subject: SR 16 SIP comments

To: Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
Caltrans
Sacramento, Ca.

Dear Karen and Caltrans,

Thank you for extending comment period on proposed changes to SR16 and comments on the scope of the draft EIR for the proposed Safety Improvements to SR 16.
In your environmental document, I would like the following questions answered:

As a safety improvement project -

... Characterize the type of accidents that have occurred on SR16, including location and factors related to cause and identify options that may have minimized the severity of that accident and future accidents at that location. Describe and define the Safety goals for the roadway and the project.

... The proposed design speed and road configuration appears to create capacity enhancement to SR16. Define and describe the relation of design speed to capacity -- does a 60 mph design and the proposed roadway create capacity increases or the potential for future capacity increases in the roadway? Justify the proposed increase in design speeds and relate both to capacity, safety and project cost.

... What is the relationship of traffic calming activities and proposed design? Can traffic calming be applied to the entire roadway to reduce speeds closer to the present 55 mph design speed?

... Identify the specific sites on the study area where LOS is poorest. Can changes be made to these areas rather than the entire roadway to keep LOS at D and above? Does the area in front of the casino factor into the total roadway LOS? How does LOS change if this area is factored out? Are the communities of Esparto and Capay included? How will signaling the

specific intersections proposed (Madison, Esparto, 85B) affect LOS for the entire roadway? What are the alternatives for maintaining the existing centerline of the roadway and maintaining an adequate LOS for the study area while achieving safety goals?

... Since funding for all programs in the state is currently in question, what is the most cost effective way to facilitate safety enhancement to SR16?

How does project cost change with the proposed design -- and what is its expected realizable gain for safety as opposed to a scaled-down project maintaining the existing centerline, focusing on 55 mph, minimum shoulder expansion, and focusing on readily realizable safety enhancement?

... Is there a concern that drivers, given an 8' shoulder, will utilize that shoulder to pass on the right? Can there be comment on shoulder width and concerns of law enforcement and local citizens about this width and illegal passing on the right?

... With a design speed of 60 mph, what are the real road speeds expected, and are there enhanced problems with higher road speeds and slow-moving farm equipment, such as the potential for more severe accidents between farm equipment and faster-moving vehicles?

... SR16 has areas within the study area that are scenic and important parts of the rural character of the valley. How will tree removal, removal of heritage oaks, home removal, architectural resources, be mitigated?

... How effective have the safety enhancements been to date on SR16 (since 1998)? Is the accident rate per thousand miles of travel increasing or decreasing with the improvements to SR16 done in the past 5 years? Has average traffic speed slowed for the roadway during this same period? Are past traffic speeds the reason for the proposed 60mph design, and do slowing traffic speeds change the justification for the design speed proposed?

... What are the growth inducing impacts of the proposed roadway on the Capay Valley? How will the agricultural economy, farmland uses, and farm-worker housing prices and availabilities be impacted? How will farmland prices most likely be affected? What are the impacts of a faster/wider road or total traffic volume on the ability for agricultural operations to continue to co-exist with other enterprises in the area?

... How are projections for the expected traffic volume over the next 10-20 years derived? What are factors that are expected to influence the traffic volume in the next 10-20 years? Can the road be oversized if these projections aren't realized? What are the impacts of an overbuilt, under-traveled road on the agricultural economy of the region?

... If private funding is secured for the project or for portions of the project, how does Caltrans expect to insulate the design from the funder, and still create a process of open public comment, evaluation of the design and flexibility based on community impact? Is cost a limiting factor in the proposed design, triggering Caltrans to consider alternative designs?

... Are other options being considered other than the two proposed for the area in front of the casino -- perhaps a bypass for through traffic without signalization and an underpass to return traffic from the casino to SR16 southbound? Will other options be considered -- where will there be time for other options to be discussed and evaluated?

... What are the impacts of a 60 mph design on the ability of small business to conduct business? Does a slower roadway facilitate greater business opportunities along the roadway? Do increased speeds create a more dangerous interface between small roadside farm businesses and the ability of travelers to patronize, utilize or merge back on to SR16 after visiting these stands? Evaluate road speed and design standards and the effect on local business, including the potential for local business to safely establish.

... Could the timeline for a completed project be shortened with a largely scaled-down design and maintaining a 55 mph design standard?

I thank you for considering these questions in your environmental impact

report.

Sincerely,

Paul Muller

State Route 16 Safety Sooner

Caltrans is proposing a "safety improvement project" design for State Route 16 from I-505 to Brooks. The project includes:

- An expanded State Route 16 from its present average paved width of 25 ft. to 40 paved ft. -- two -12 ft. lanes, two -8 ft. paved shoulders and two -12 ft. clear unpaved zones with 15 additional feet for utilities.
- Eliminating most of the existing vegetation for approximately 40 feet on one side of the roadway, including heritage oaks, as well as several houses and other structures, significantly altering the scenic character that makes the SR 16 corridor a unique and beautiful part of Yolo County's landscape.
- Re-aligning curves, and, in places, abandons the existing roadway altogether for an entirely new 64-foot roadway.
- Converting farmland to roadway, removing productive orchard trees, and relocating utilities
- Capay and Esparto are excluded from this project.

Caltrans is proposing increasing the design standard from the current 55 mph roadway to a 60 mph design. By Caltrans' admission, average roadway speeds would be 63-65 mph. Residents feel that increased speed would heighten the danger and severity of accidents. Although wider shoulders would allow tractors to travel off of the main roadway, it may also encourage passing on the right because such a wide area of pavement will be constructed.

Caltrans estimates the cost of this proposed project at above 50 million dollars. Funding is not yet secured. Because of the lengthy process involved in completing a project of this magnitude- including writing and certifying an EIR, acquiring land, and funding acquisition- the begin construction date is not until 2007. For many years, community members have asked that safety improvements be implemented as quickly as possible with minimal changes to the existing roadway and with sensitivity to the agricultural economy in order to preserve the agricultural landscape of the Capay Valley.

For these reasons, many residents are urging Caltrans to reconsider its design. The proposed highway design is excessive, expensive and will turn a beautiful rural highway into a speedway. CalTrans insists on a 60 mph design yet, according to the Federal Highway Administration, flexibility in design speed is negotiable based upon community input. Caltrans should modify its proposal in order to implement safety improvement projects


with the next funding cycle in Spring 2004 -- as quickly as possible. The following solutions are realistic, affordable, and acceptable:

- Create safety improvements that maintain a 55 mph design using, as much as possible, the highway's existing center line
- Wherever possible, develop 3-4 ft. paved shoulders that are 11 ft. from centerline
- Establish regular turnouts for agriculture equipment and slow drivers
- Dots or rumble strip on edge of roadway
- No re-alignment of Taber's Corner; establish guardrails at Taylor Creek
- More advisory signs about curves, bigger "No Passing" signs, speed limit signs, agricultural equipment signs
- Use existing roadway in front of casino to avoid going deep into the former Beeman Ranch
- Some turn lanes and acceleration lanes at main valley intersections
- Minimal tree removal

The proposed CalTrans plan offers safety improvements beginning in 2007 with completion around 2010. CalTrans' design would create a marginally safer road, however the design scope verges on capacity enhancements that conflict with the Capay Valley and Yolo County General Plans; it is growth inducing, and will adversely affect the agricultural economy and rural character of this community.

The magnitude of CalTrans' proposed design is evident. Caltrans should modify the Safety Improvement Plan for SR 16, so that safety can be achieved sooner, in a more cost effective manner, and the rural character of Capay Valley preserved.

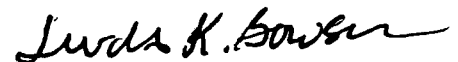
The magnitude of CalTrans' proposed design is evident. We, the undersigned, request that Caltrans modify the Safety Improvement Plan for SR 16 in the ways suggested above so that safety can be achieved sooner.

| Print Name | Address | Signature |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| William E. Baker | 14845 CR42 Guinda, CA 95637 |  |

Malinda P. Baker 14845 Co. Rd. 42
Guinda, CA 95637



LINDA K BOWSER 3430 MADRONE ST.
RUMSEY, CA 95679



CHARLES OPPER 3430 MADRONE ST
RUMSEY, CA. 95679



State Route 16 Safety Sooner

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For these reasons, many residents are urging Caltrans to reconsider its design. The proposed highway design is excessive, expensive and will turn a beautiful rural highway into a speedway. CalTrans insists on a 60 mph design yet, according to the Federal Highway Administration, flexibility in design speed is negotiable based upon community input. Caltrans should modify its proposal in order to implement safety improvement projects

List of signatures endorsing a modified SR 16 Safety Improvement Project

| Print Name | Address | Signature |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Sumner Stone | P.O. Box 53, Guinda 95637 | Sumner Stone |
| Robert Bramlett | P.O. Box 146, Rumsey 95679 | Robert Bramlett |
| SHIRLEY BRAMLETT | " " " | Shirley R. Bramlett |
| JOHN CETERAS | P.O. BOX 68 RUMSEY | John Ceteras |
| NIKOLE FACCIUTO | 4815 State Hwy 16 Guinda | Nikole Facciuto |
| VINCENT FACCIUTO | 4815 State Hwy 16 Guinda | Vincent Facciuto |
| VICTORIA FACCIUTO | 4815 State Hwy 16 Guinda | Victoria Facciuto |

List of signatures endorsing a modified SR 16 Safety Improvement Project

| Print Name | Address | Signature |
|------------|---------|-----------|
| C. Baldo | Rumsey | C. Baldo |

2953 Leta Lane
Sacramento, CA 95821
(916) 489-4709
June 24, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Proposed Safety Improvement to State Route 16 (SR 16)
in Yolo County, CA

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

As a land owner in the Esparto area (some of which has been in my family for the past 80 years) I would like to comment on the improvements proposed for State Route 16 in the Esparto area.

I believe it is critical to the planning of the improvements to SR 16 to take into consideration the possible future alignment of the state route around the Esparto township which is a major "bottle-neck" for the traffic flow between the Indian Casino in Brooks and Interstate 505. While Project Location sheet page 2 of 2 map does not show any by-pass highway alignment, the termination of the proposed improvements on the north and south sides of Esparto would tend to indicate that if at some future date a by-pass were proposed for Esparto, it would go to the west side of the town where currently there are final plans underway to develop housing projects which would negate any such alignment proposal.

Some 18 months ago I proposed to Mr. David Morrison and Ms. Darlene Comingore, P.E., of the County of Yolo Planning and Public Works Department that they contact Caltrans and suggest a future by-pass route following the old railroad right on the east side of Esparto and that SR 16 be extended on the north side of Esparto straight through to an intercept point with the railroad right of way on the east (see attached map given to the aforementioned people). You will also note on the Esparto by-pass map that I recommended that SR 16 be widened to 4 lanes between the start of the Esparto by-pass and Interstate 505. While the 4 lane road is not contemplated at this time I believe that it is only prudent that the right of way for a 4 lane road be acquired at this time and that bridges and culverts be built to accomodate such a road within the next decade. I strongly believe that the population of Esparto will more than double over the next 10 years and that traffic flow on SR 16 in the Esparto area will more than triple in that same time period.

If this by-pass proposal is adopted it would mean that the proposed SR 16 improvement on the south side of Esparto could be

Pg 2 Ltr to Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
dtd June 24, 2003

shortened by some 3/4 of a mile and the dollars for the south side development could then be applied to the north side of Esparto extending the project down to the start of the "S" curve looking south into the town of Esparto.

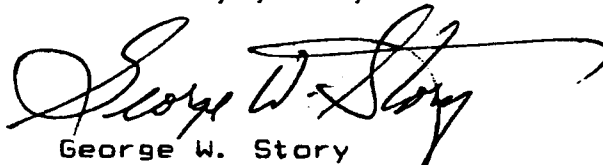
While the by-pass project may be a decade away, I believe it is essential that long range plans be developed so that future housing development and school siting can be taken into account for future highway development plans.

I also suggest that you get the USGS to update their Quadrangle sheet because most of the almond trees shown on your project location sheet page 2 of 2 on the south, west and north sides of Esparto no longer exist. In fact the west side of Esparto is currently completely filled with new homes and with more proposed for the south and north sides of the town.

Again I would like to emphasize how important it is to have current information for the planning for Esparto's development as well as Caltrans's long range planning for future highway development. At the current time there are no homes or other structures along the proposed path of the Esparto SR 16 by-pass.

I sincerely hope that you and your associates will have the foresight to plan "long range" for the future of SR 16 in the Esparto area.

Cordially yours,



George W. Story

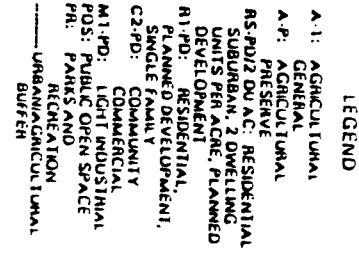
Enclosure: Esparto Proposed By-pass Map.

:oem

cc: Veon Zentner

Jeff Robinson
Emerald Homes, Inc.
383 Diabla Road, Suite 100
Danville, CA 94526

HIGHWAY
BYPASS



RECOMMEND 4 LANE ROAD
AND STRIP OF ESPARTE
BYPASS!
BYPASS!
BYPASS!



AGRICULTURE INDUSTRIES, INC.

P.O. Box 1076, 3002 Beacon Blvd., West Sacramento, California 95691

(916) 372-5595 FAX: (916) 372-5615

July 7, 2003

Ms. Karen McWilliams
Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Dept of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, California 95833

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

Re: Highway 16 Improvement Project

Agriculture Industries, Inc. is the management company for APN 49-090-11-1 on the southwest corner of Highway 16 and Interstate 505.

After reviewing the aerial photos of the project as pertains to our property, I have some concerns:

1. Will the roadway be raised? If so, will it exacerbate an already existing flooding potential?
2. Will the project affect our access to Highway 16?
3. One of our wells appears to be within the scope of the project. If it is, we will expect it to be replaced.

If you would, please call me at 916/372-5595 so we can go over my concerns.

Sincerely,

Tim McIsaac
Executive Vice President

TM:dlh

cc: Mr. Manfred W. Schropp

July 8, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

File: EA 03-OC4700

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

As landowners of property adjacent to S.R. 16, we would like you to consider our comments and concerns relative to the proposed project and incorporate them into the CEQA Comments and Responses for this project.

Our property is designated along approximately 1 ½ miles south of S.R. 16 within the Modified Environmental Study Limits as shown on Project Location Sheet 2 of 2. We have serious environmental concerns related to the lack of coordination with us as landowners of possible areas of land slated for highway improvements; concerns related to inadequate Soils/Hydrological analysis; inadequate assessment of Community Impacts; and failure to adequately address the need for Private Intersection improvements. These issues are defined as follows:

1. Lack of coordination. Although promised in earlier public meetings, we and other landowners/farm operators have not been furnished with a copy of the Draft EIR on the S.R. 16 project. I attended a Special meeting of CSA #1 of the Madison Advisory Committee on April 8, 2003 hosted by Caltrans at which we were shown maps of proposed flood control alternatives which included a portion of Willow Slough that I partially own and is a critical drainage and irrigation slough on our ranch. I was advised by Caltrans staff that I would be subsequently consulted and notified of improvements proposed by Caltrans on Willow Slough and be advised of any land purchases or easements required. I have subsequently heard nothing from Caltrans concerning Willow Slough or any other S.R. 16 project improvements that might affect our farming operation or our land.
2. Inadequate Soils/ Hydrological Analyses. Extensive use of fill is proposed to elevate S.R. 16 above the 100 year floodplain. The summary of the EIR states that the impact of this fill on the existing floodplain and other area will be modified in such a way as to not adversely impact the floodplain. No detail is provided as to how this will be accomplished or the location of where fill will be obtained, the quantity of fill required, or how the hydrology of the floodplain will be protected so as to reduce backwater effects. The backwater effects of I-5 on S.R. 16 and adjacent lands are well known throughout the region. Our property could be in the direct path of backwater flows that could adversely impact our farming as well as several residential structures. A detailed discussion of potential hydrological impacts of the raised highway should be completed. Furthermore, a detailed discussion of the mitigation

plans and monitoring, as well as the indirect impacts of proposed mitigation is required for both hydrological and soils impacts. A project map should also be included to show proposed excavation areas for the needed fill.

3. Community impacts. The Summary of impacts states that proposed improvements would require acquisition of several parcels of privately owned land and possible relocation of residences. It is not possible to assess the magnitude of these impacts unless the parcels are identified and mapped. This should be a requirement prior to certification of the EIR.
4. Private Intersection Improvements. At the Madison CSA public meeting and at other public hearings, Caltrans staff has stipulated that Caltrans improvements could not be funded on private property. This determination should be reconsidered on a case-by-case basis. The intersection of Oakdale Ranch Road and S.R. 16, that is also on our property, not only serves several residences and a number of rural residents, but is also the main intersection serving the Esparto community sewer ponds. There is frequent traffic entering S.R. 16, and oncoming traffic has no warning of the intersection and often passes in the proximity of the intersection at high speeds. Casino traffic often trespasses on our private roadway and discards trash or simply camps. The public safety impacts are obvious and need to be mitigated at public expense, not private expense.

Thank you for consideration of our comments and please put us on your mailing list related to the project.

Sincerely,


John and Meredith Stephens

P.O. Box 509

Esparto, CA 95627

Cc: Yolo County Farm Bureau

Capay Valley

VINEYARDS

P.O.Box 17, Brooks, CA 95606 tel. (530) 796-3788 fax (530) 796-3788

July 10, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
Caltrans
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, Ca 95833

Re: Response to NOP for Safety improvements State Route 16 Yolo County

We strongly recommend that the project stop at Road 78. Both options presented thus far severely impact the ingress/egress of our business.

An underpass should be used to facilitate casino customers exiting south onto highway 16 at the new main entrance to the expansion project. An underpass feeding a merge lane would keep traffic flowing. Traffic from the north would not have to stop at a light either. This would eliminate the stoplight which greatly adds to air pollution.

A slight realignment of the curve north of the casino would facilitate access to the highway for the post office, CDF, and home at 13943 Highway 16. See sketch attached.

This solution would keep the new roadway closer to the existing one reducing the net loss of prime farmland. It would also keep the noise and light pollution closer to the casino vs moving it closer to the residents on Co Road 78.

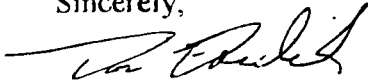
This solution could also be implemented now in lieu of the "temporary" proposal (May 2003 initial study) which is planned to remove all the trees in front of the post office. Those trees need not be removed if the roadway were realigned slightly to the west. All of the land to the west of the highway belongs to the casino.

A large number of accidents on highway 16 occur due to drivers falling asleep or inattention, drifting off the road on either side, and hitting utility poles. The frequency of these accidents leaves the Capay Valley without electricity - recently for over 12 hours. This means no water pressure in a high fire danger area. The relocation of utilities underground is an important safety concern.

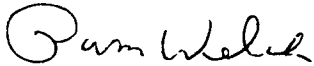
p.2

In keeping with context sensitive design, the parkway concept should be used. Examples of successful rural parkway designs are - the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Teutonic Parkway in the Hudson River area. The parkway concept will address numerous safety issues and it is good long term thinking for the economic viability and preservation of this unique area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Frederick".

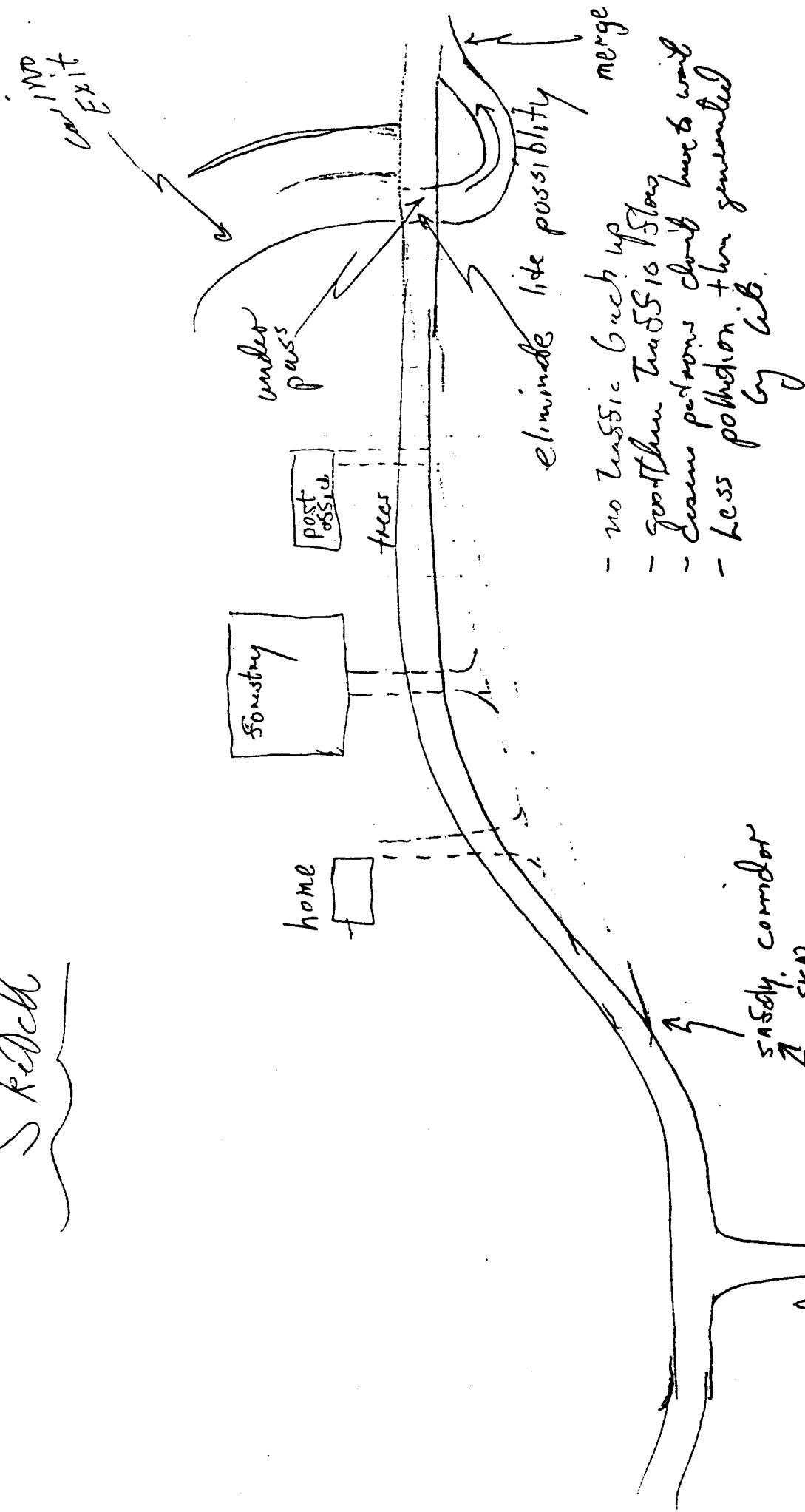
Tom Frederick

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pam Welch".

Pam Welch

attachment

Sketch



- no traffic back up
- go through traffic 10/10
- some persons don't have to wait
- less pollution than generated by car.

Start - otherwise our business will be restricted

County # 78

July 11, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Comments on the Notice of Preparation of the Draft EIR for the
Highway 16 Safety Improvement Project.

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

There are two comments I would like to make and would like Caltrans to address:

1. Widening Highway 16 to such an extent as is proposed, and "straightening" the curves will increase traffic speed. This seems contrary to the reason for the project itself: SAFETY. This is a rural, agricultural community. Tractors, bicycles and horses will not speed up with the traffic flow, but will be further endangered by the high speed of the traffic. A car passing a tractor or bicycle at 60-70 mph is much more dangerous than one passing at 45 mph or less (whether or not there is a side lane for slower vehicles). If this project is about safety, why not implement safety features and slow the speed? Slowing the traffic speed to 45 mph, adding bumps along the shoulder (like those on Highway 20 along the Clear Lake shore), and other safety features (signs, etc.) will improve the safety of this road. The Safety Improvement Project as proposed seems to provide anything but safety for members of this community and those who use the road.

2. As designed this project will increase speed, and as a result, increase capacity. Capacity enhancements on this stretch of Highway 16 will induce growth in this area - contrary to what is stated in the Yolo County General Plan. The Yolo County General Plan Agricultural Element Policy Document (2002) states:

Goal

AG-4: Support and promote a healthy and competitive agricultural community and economy. (p. 4-1).

Objective

AO-1: Recognition of agriculture as the most important industry in Yolo County. (p. 4-2).

AO-14: Provision of adequate public infrastructure and services to support the agricultural community, including the ability to continue to move agricultural equipment along and across public roads. (p.4-2)

Policy

AP-1: Land uses in areas designated for agricultural use shall be limited to those directly related to agricultural production or support of agriculture. (p. 4-3).

AP-13: Agricultural lands shall be protected from urban encroachment by limiting the extension of urban service facilities and infrastructure, particularly sewers. (p. 4-4).

AP-29: The County shall ensure that public roadways and drainage facilities do not adversely impact agricultural lands and shall engage the agricultural community when proposing significant modifications to such facilities. (p. 4-6).

Implementation

AI-14: When undertaking improvement of public roadways and drainage facilities, consult with adjoining farmland owners and incorporate designs that minimize impact on agriculture. (p. 4-10).

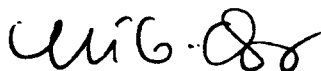
In order to increase safety and to protect the agricultural industry in this area, these goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures should be incorporated into the Highway 16 Safety Improvement Project. In other words, please make a more realistic “context sensitive design”.

As a resident of this County, I have commented on these County General Plan documents and they have been approved by our Board of Supervisors. I have learned that before changes are made to this area they must be consistent with the Yolo County General Plan. It is stated very clearly in the Agricultural Element that farmers will be able to move agricultural equipment along and across public roads (AO-14). A wider road, with faster moving traffic will endanger those driving slower moving

farm equipment and will make it even more dangerous to cross the highway - *this Safety Improvement Project as designed will inhibit the movement of agricultural equipment along and across the highway.* Also, the General Plan states that farms will be protected from urban encroachment (infrastructure) and will not be adversely impacted by public roadway modifications (AP-1, AP-13, AP-29). *As proposed this Safety Improvement Project is covering viable farmland, and increasing traffic speed (thereby increasing road capacity, which will induce growth in the area) - this will adversely impact farmers in this area.* Finally, the Plan states that before improvements of public roadways are made, nearby farmland owners will be consulted and designs which minimize impacts on agriculture will be incorporated (AI-14). *At the Transportation Concept Report and Traffic Calming public workshop in May the community overwhelmingly voiced its support for agriculture. This community support for agriculture is also expressed in the Yolo County General Plan. This must be reflected in the Safety Improvement Project.*

Please consider changing the proposed project so the design fits with the community it serves. This is an agricultural, historical community and a scenic highway. The project should encourage slower traffic, not a wider highway with faster traffic. The project should have little or no impact on farmland, and the scenic value of this road. This can be done by increasing safety features and signage and reducing the speed limit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nina G. Andres', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nina G. Andres

P.O. Box 73
Rumsey, CA 95679
(530) 796-4084

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management
California Dept. of Transportation
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr. MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

July 21, 2003

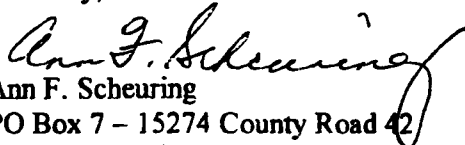
Dear Ms. McWilliams,

I wish to comment on the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report regarding the Highway 16 Safety Improvement Project. I would like to make three major points, which I feel very strongly about.

1. Highway 16 has historically been a rural-area highway serving a relatively small, agriculturally-based population. It now has much higher traffic counts and safety problems associated with the Rumsey Indian Casino. **THE TRIBE SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PAY ITS FAIR SHARE OF ANY SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**, say 70 percent of the total. California taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for an "independent nation" getting rich off what would be an illegal activity for anyone else.
2. The community, as has been demonstrated in several meetings to date with CalTrans and other entities, wants to preserve the character of the Capay Valley as much as possible, i.e. its scenic and rural characteristics including heritage oaks and landscape views. **THE COMMUNITY DOES NOT WANT A WIDER HIGHWAY WITH HIGHER SPEED LIMITS**. What the community wants is safety improvements, which would include turnouts for slow vehicles at appropriate intervals, wider shoulders and improved curves in some areas, more signage, rumble strips, and strict enforcement of 45 to 55-mile speed limits.
3. The Capay Valley is a small valley with relatively small agricultural fields bordering the highway. Gouging out portions of these fields to make room for a wider highway will help to destroy the agricultural economy and pose the threat of rapid conversion to suburban uses, contrary to the Yolo County General Plan and the Capay Valley General Plan. **HIGHWAY 16 SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A CONVENIENT PRIVATE DRIVEWAY TO THE CASINO**. The Casino has entirely different interests from most Capay Valley residents. *The Casino should require or encourage its patrons to use Casino busses from I-505 or explore the option of using the old railroad right-of-way for its own private small-gauge train.* These options should be explored in the CalTrans EIR.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,


Ann F. Scheuring
PO Box 7 - 15274 County Road 42
Rumsey, CA 95679
(530)796-2166

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

July 22, 2003

RE: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for Proposed Safety Improvements to State Route 16 in Yolo County, CA

Dear Ms. McWilliams,

I live and work in Capay Valley, and since part of my work involves driving a delivery truck to the Bay Area, and driving a tractor on the highway, I am familiar with the current highway conditions, and have very strong opinions about the proposed improvements. I am concerned about the magnitude of the current projects, its potential impacts, and the amount of time it will take to complete construction. Below you will find more detailed comments regarding the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Proposed State Route 16 Safety Improvement Project (SIP):

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site between I-505 and Brooks is a distance of approximately 12-14 miles, not ~21 miles as listed in the NOP.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION and PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The proposed improvements in the NOP as listed on the left side of the table below is an enormous and expensive project that will: significantly alter this unique scenic highway, destroy many residential and agricultural buildings and structures, remove a significant amount of acreage from agriculture, potentially create growth inducing impacts, and will require almost a decade to complete.

On the right side of the table, I have offered my suggestions for alternatives that will improve safety sooner, more easily, and with less money.

| Caltrans Proposed Improvement | Suggested Alternative Improvements |
|--|--|
| Provide a 20-foot clear recover zone which includes 8-foot shoulders and place rumble strips on both sides of SR 16 for the length of the project, except within the towns of Esparto and Capay. | Provide a 20-foot clear recover zone only in areas that are known to have high accident rates. For the length of the project, not including Esparto and Capay, construct 3 or 4-foot paved shoulders. Provide turnouts at regular intervals for slow moving cars and farm equipment. |
| Improve several intersections, including turning lanes. | Improve some major intersections that are frequently used, including turning lanes |
| Correct several non-standard curves. | Improve signage and lighting at curves and install guardrails on the outside of non-standard curves. |
| Raise SR 16 out of the 100-year floodplain between Esparto and Interstate 505. | Improve and/or construct drainage ditches, culverts, and water retention areas between Esparto and Interstate 505, and |

| | |
|--|---|
| | install signs that can be lit during the rainy season, which identify areas that flood. |
| Widen and/or replace all affected bridges. | Restore all affected bridges, and widen where necessary. |

Other Concerns Include:

Agriculture/ Right-of-way: As the predominant land use in the area is agriculture, the highway should be designed to accommodate for the transport of slow moving and wide farm equipment on the highway, including turnouts. Raising the highway between Madison and Esparto may pose a problem for getting farm equipment onto the highway. Such modifications that will affect the transport of farm equipment should be evaluated and mitigated in the DEIR.

The NOP states that, " Additional right-of-way adjacent to SR 16 would be required to accommodate the proposed project." But to my knowledge, the current right-of-way has not been publicly acknowledged, making the widening of it even more nebulous. The DEIR should include a thorough and exact description of the current right-of-way as well as the necessary acquisitions. The DEIR should also assess and mitigate the impact to agriculture for the loss of productive farm land due to right-of-way acquisition and any other land that will be taken out of production as a result of the SIP.

Cumulative Impacts Analysis: The DEIR should include a cumulative impacts analysis to examine the SIP in conjunction with other current or proposed projects in the area, such as the Cache Creek Casino and Bingo expansion and hotel project, other transportation projects (including the potential capacity enhancement of SR 16 and other safety and traffic-calming projects), and housing/business developments in Esparto.

Growth Inducement: The DEIR should include an examination of the potential for the SIP to induce growth, such as the potential for an increased rate of development of the Capay Valley after construction is completed.

I look forward to working with Caltrans to ensure that the SIP is appropriately designed and constructed in a timely manner, with sensitivity to our agricultural community, and with as little impact on the environment as possible. Feel free to contact me at anytime. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cathy Suematsu
P.O. Box 96
Rumsey, CA 95679
(530) 796-3714
mrink@mindspring.com

cc: Chairperson Mr. R. Kirk Lindsey, California Transportation Commission
Gray Davis, Governor of California

July 21, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr., MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Ms. McWilliams:

We urge you to abandon the Caltrans plan for highway 16 between Madison and Brooks. Ours is one of the houses you plan to tear down. What we need is small improvement to the existing road, not a freeway to the casino. Make the shoulders 2-3 feet wider, on the existing roadbed. Put in a few gravel turnouts for farm equipment, and reduce speeds on hills and big curves in the road.

This is an agricultural community and the road needs first and foremost to match the environment and mainstay of the people who live here. The road should not be here for the benefits of patrons to the facility of a group that does not pay taxes or is required to obey the environmental or zoning laws of the County.

Sincerely Yours,

Thye Wendland
Ann Wendland
15720 Hwy 16
Capay, Ca. 95807

20179 County Road 79A
Capay, CA 95607

July 21, 2003

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr., MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Chief McWilliams:

I am writing to urge Caltrans to NOT carry through the extensive road project that are planning, for a number of reasons: safety, community, timeliness, and cost. First, as you may be aware, the Capay Valley, through which SR 16 goes, is a rural, agricultural community, with almond, walnut, and pistachio orchards, vineyards, and row crops. The people have lived comfortably with the highway as it has been for many, many years, residents and tourists alike. Only with the expansion of the Cache Creek Indian Casino, going from bingo to casino, have traffic and road conditions become an issue. The reason is clear: the traffic (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year) has increased exponentially, and as the casino corporation is expanding again, the rates will be likely to continue to grow, although somewhat offset by the opening of new casinos in other areas. With the invasion of casino traffic on SR 16, it has become necessary to do something to sustain reasonable speeds and lower accident rates.

Because this is an agricultural community, tractors, tomato harvesters, combines, and other farm equipment must travel on SR 16. These vehicles travel at slow speeds. Widening the highway and straightening the curves as proposed will make it more dangerous for everyone on SR 16. Even though the speed limit you propose would be 55, with the straightening, widening, and passing lanes, the speeds will certainly exceed 55 mph, ranging from 60-75 mph. To have a highway enabling speeds of 60 and above would encourage higher speeds, and pulling off the highway and merging back onto the highway with increased vehicle speeds will substantially increase danger to farmers and drivers alike. Currently the average speed on SR 16 is *de facto* between 45 and 55 mph, averaging 50 mph, largely due to the increased long lines of traffic. With these lower speeds, and probably the fact that repeat gambling customers are growing used to the highway, the rate of traffic accidents has decreased and the threats to drivers and farmers have decreased. **You cannot have farm equipment merging onto a highway of high speeds and make it safe!** Furthermore, putting in eight foot shoulders and passing lanes will encourage passing on left and right, further endangering local and agricultural equipment drivers.

In addition, a widened, faster highway will reduce local commerce of roadside produce stands, ways for local residents to make a living. People will be less able and less inclined to slow and stop at these stands with the proposed highway expansion. Thus, the planned highway would undermine the standard of agriculture and local enterprise.

Furthermore, widening the highway as proposed will undermine the rural, agricultural character of the community. We do not want a freeway in our Valley. It goes against the Capay Valley Vision and all the work the citizens have done to sustain the area as a viable agricultural community. The Cal Trans plan proposes cutting down beautiful, old trees, paving over acres of farm land which can never again be put into production, and destroying historic homes, along with destroying the historical site of the old Cadenassa School. None of this benefits the people who live and work for a living here. Nor does it benefit tourists who come here to enjoy the out-of-doors scenic, rural character of the Capay Valley. It only benefits the casino and their continual expansion, whose patrons clearly have one goal: to get to the casino as fast as possible. Also, raising SR 16 from Madison to Esparto would, once again, work against the safety and access of farmers.

Here is an alternative plan: install 2-3 foot shoulders on SR-16 from Madison to Brooks. The roadbed is there all ready to support such a safety project. Put a rumble strip along the edge of the road, so drivers will be warned when they are straying and still have 2-3 feet to return to the highway. Most accidents come from drivers catching a tire on the gravel and trying to correct it. With a slightly widened shoulder, this problem will be greatly reduced. In addition, put in gravel turn out areas every 1-2 miles so farmers can pull out to allow traffic to pass. Make it gravel so car drivers cannot pass people on the right. Farm vehicles are traveling slowly so a gravel turnout will suffice, as it does now, where they turn out at county roads. In addition, put additional warning signs along the road. At Taber's corner, the Tabers no longer have vehicles driving off the highway onto their property since the 45mph sign and curve-warning signs were erected. Reduce speeds to 45 or 50 mph coming up the hills where visibility is shortened. At the curve between CR 80 and CR 79, there at the Cadenassa School, the road is not banked properly. Either signs need to be placed there to slow traffic to 45 – a continuation from Taber's Corner perhaps – or the road needs to be properly banked, or better yet, both. Straightening, widening, and destroying the character of the Capay Valley is not the only or the best way to reduce traffic accidents. Slowing traffic and accommodating agriculture will work fine AND preserve the Valley.

Furthermore, The plan proposed by Cal Trans goes against the Yolo County General Plan Agricultural Element Policy Document (2002) in its goal to support and promote a healthy and competitive agricultural community and economy (AG-4, p. 4-1). It goes against Objectives AO-1 and AO-14. It violates policies AP-1, AP-13, AP-29, as well as Implementation policy AI-14.

Widening shoulders 2-3 feet, putting rumble strips along the side of the highway, increasing signs, reducing speeds at hill crests and big curves, lowering speeds at selected curves and hill crests, putting in three or four gravel turnouts for farm equipment has several

advantages. First, it would sustain and cooperate with agriculture. Second, it would be congruent with the Capay Valley Vision. Third, it would reduce accidents NOW – not in 5-6 years! Fourth, it would cooperate with the agricultural nature of the Valley. Fifth, it would save the State millions of dollars! Sixth, it would not destroy homes and farmland. Seventh, ancient trees and habitat would not be destroyed.

Engineering designs by non-residents should not rule lives of people who live in an area, especially for the interests of “sovereign” nations who operate above the laws of the United States (taxes, building codes, environmental codes, zoning regulations, etc.). And it is clear that the scope of this project is obviously attuned to the Cache Creek Casino desire to get more patrons to the Casino faster. The Casino could build their own driveway to the Casino – from CR 18, from I-5, for example. There is no reason the citizens of California should have to foot the bill for a sovereign nation and destroy one of the remaining treasures of the State: the beautiful, rural, agricultural Capay Valley.

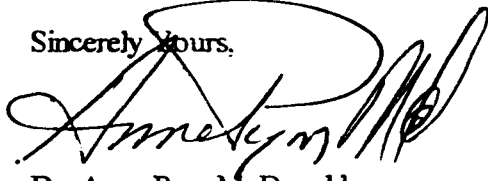
I also have some questions I would like to have addressed. I have recently been on SR 1, SR 20, SR 50, to name three. All are narrow, windy roads, with little or no shoulder. All have high volumes of traffic to a variety of destinations. None are being subjected to the huge widening, grading projects like projected by Caltrans for SR 16 between Madison and Brooks. Why is SR 16 being targeted? What influence has Governor Davis had on the speed and size of the project proposed by Caltrans? What influence has the Wintun tribe had? What have their communications with Caltrans been? How much have noise and pollution already increased in the Capay Valley, since the expansion of the Cache Indian Bingo from bingo to casino? How much would it increase by Cal Trans not only accommodating but inviting increased traffic with their planned expansion? What is the relationship between funding State highways and designs submitted and/or advocated by private enterprises (U.S. or other nations)? One of the things we have heard from Cal Trans is that the speed limit for State highways is 55. If so, then why is the speed going east into Woodland, well outside the city limits, reduced to 45 mph? Even on Interstate highways and numerous State highways, whole new temporary highway routes are not regularly built to facilitate traffic while constructing highway. This seems to be both an extraordinary and excessive plan, and one that makes me wonder if it is not to facilitate casino traffic – by whose request? What is going on here? In addition, it appears that Cal Trans is doing a lot of piece meal planning (like at frontage of casino) and not following CEQA. Is Caltrans not required to follow CEQA and to report to the citizens possible, *specific*, environmental effects of the projected plan, as well as planned mitigations?

Further, I understand that the Citizens Advisory Committee for Caltrans is loaded with paid consultants, including at least one from the casino. We need a real community committee, where the residents of the Capay Valley are represented and their ideas and opinions are taken seriously.

In sum, it is clear that the planned expansion would indeed have significant and negative environmental impacts, counter to the character and well being of the Capay Valley. It is also clear that the alternative I have offered would decrease negative environmental impacts while increasing safety in the very near future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Pym McDonald", written over a circular scribble.

Dr. Anne Pym McDonald
Almond Farmer
(530) 796-3821

cc: Governor Gray Davis
Transportation Commission

Karen McWilliams, Chief Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr., MS-15
Sacramento, Ca 95833

July 21, 2003

Dear Karen McWilliams:

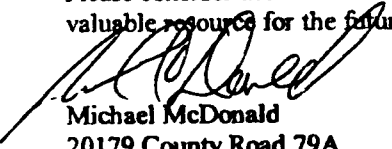
I have great concern regarding the proposed "improvement" of State Highway 16 from Woodland to Cache Creek Casino. I understand that the proposal involves the widening of the road to facilitate higher speed (55 mph) and greater safety.

As a resident of the Capay Valley I do not feel that we need or want a high speed roadway. The valley is an agricultural community and has existed for agriculture and tourism. The tourism has mainly involved outdoor recreation on Cache Creek, and the beautiful landscape of an agricultural community. The proposed roadway does nothing for this. The only benefit of such an expansion is for a group that does not even pay taxes and whose only contribution is voluntary and arbitrary. The Casino owners claim that they are a sovereign nation and do not have to abide by the same regulations and obligations that are incurred on the rest of the residents of the valley.

There are alternatives to a real and existing problem with the roadway. I believe that by correcting some of the immediate problems with the road we could accommodate the needs of the valley taxpayers and the need for safety. By simply widening the EXISTING right of way where there are gravel shoulders two to three feet and adding rumble strip would go a long way to increase safety. There are a few areas that need a turnoff for slow moving farm equipment. DECREASED speeds in some areas.

These may seem to be very simply solutions to (viewed) complex problems but they do in fact address some IMMEDIATE needs and at a huge decrease in the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars.

Please consider the voice of a person that works and lives in the valley and wants to preserve a very valuable resource for the future.



Michael McDonald
20179 County Road 79A
Capay, Ca 95607

cc: Governor Gray Davis
Transportation Commission

21 July 2003

This is a response to the proposed design of the Caltrans "safety improvement project" for State Route 16 from I-505 to Brooks, which would widen the roadway from 25' or so to more than 60', and yet exclude the communities of Esparto and Capay.

The construction would eliminate much of the existing vegetation along the route, as well as some houses and other structures. It would require the relocation of utilities, conversion of farmland to roadway, removal of productive orchards, elimination of heritage oaks. It would ruin the scenic character that makes State Route 16 a unique and beautiful part of Yolo County's landscape.

Caltrans is proposing increasing the design standard from the present 55 mph roadway to a 60 mph design. By Caltrans admission, average roadway speeds would be 63-65 mph. Increased speed would heighten the danger and severity of accidents between fast-moving traffic and slow-moving farm equipment. Although wider shoulders would allow tractors to travel off the main roadway, passing on the right may also be encouraged.

Caltrans estimates the cost of this proposed project at above 50 million-dollars. They have reported that the funding is not yet secured, and this project would have to compete for a dwindling pool of funds that the state presently has available. Because of the lengthy process that will be involved in completing such a huge project, including writing and certifying an EIR, acquiring land, funding acquisition and the certain community challenges, construction of safety improvements will begin in 2007 or beyond. This community has asked that safety improvements be implemented as quickly as possible with a minimum of changes to the existing roadway and with sensitivity to the agricultural economy and the unique character of the landscape that State Route 16 passes through.

To provide safety now, there are many small and effective projects that Caltrans could begin implementing as soon as possible. Improved signage, guardrails at slough crossings, and noise-striping fog-lines would all improve safety in a short time. With the appropriately enhanced traffic enforcement, State Route 16 could be made much safer without all the destruction involved in the "safety proposal."

We feel that the proposed project is excessive, expensive, and will turn a beautiful rural highway into a speedway. Give us safety now, not a freeway in the future.

Harmon Taber
Greta Cassill Taber
20943 Tabers Corner
Orinda CA 94557